

Dog days of *summer*

On hot and sunny days, it's crucial to make sure our furry companions stay safe and healthy. Here are five essential tips to keep your pets happy and thriving during the warm weather months.

1. Hydration is Key

Just like us, pets need plenty of water, especially when the temperature soars. Dehydration can lead to serious health issues, so make sure your pet always has access to fresh, clean water. If you're taking your furry friend on outdoor adventures, bring along a portable water bowl and offer frequent drinking breaks. Keep in mind that some pets, like dogs, may need more water than usual when exercising in the heat.

2. Protect Against Pests and Parasites

Summer brings out not only the sunshine but also pesky pests like fleas, ticks and mosquitoes. These critters can transmit diseases like Lyme disease and heartworm, which can be harmful or even fatal to pets. Speak to your veterinarian about the best parasite prevention methods for your pet, whether it's a topical treatment, oral medication or a collar. Regular grooming and thorough tick checks after time spent outdoors are also essential for keeping harmful bugs at bay.

3. Practice Sun Safety

Pets can get sunburned, too, especially those with light-coloured fur or exposed skin. Limit your pet's time in direct sunlight, especially during the peak hours of 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. If your pup will be spending time outdoors, apply pet-safe sunscreen to vulnerable areas like the nose, ears and belly. Providing shaded areas and access to indoors during the hottest parts of the day can also help prevent overheating.



4. Never Leave Pets in Parked Cars

Even on a mild day, the temperature inside a parked car can rise to dangerous levels within minutes. Leaving your fur baby unattended in the car, even with the windows cracked, can quickly lead to heatstroke and death. If you need to run errands, leave your pet at home where it's cool and safe. And if you see a pet left in a parked car on a hot day, contact local authorities immediately.

5. Exercise Mindfully

While staying active is important for your pet's physical and mental well-being, it's important to exercise mindfully during the summer. Opt for early morning or late evening walks when it's cooler and pavement surfaces are less likely to burn your pet's paw pads. Keep an eye out for signs of overheating, such as excessive panting, drooling or weakness and take breaks in the shade as needed. Swimming can be a great way for pets to cool off, but always supervise them around water.