



Seasonal Pet Care Tips

Spring and Summer

- Never leave your pet in a parked vehicle in warm weather; it is illegal in some states and can be a deadly decision. Even with partly opened windows, the temperature can quickly rise to 160 degrees; your pet could become brain damaged or die from heatstroke. On hot days your pet is safer at home!
- It is dangerous, and illegal in some states, to drive with a pet in the back of a pickup truck. Transport your pet inside the truck cab or in a secured crate in the bed of the truck. However, on a hot day a crate in the back of a parked truck can heat up quickly, like an oven. Again, your pet is safer at home!
- On a hot day an overheated vehicle can leak antifreeze, which can be lethal to pets. Thoroughly clean up any antifreeze spills immediately and keep your pet away from parking areas—many pets like antifreeze because it has a sweet taste. Consider using less hazardous antifreeze in your vehicle.
- Don't let your pet stick its head out of a vehicle's windows when traveling—the pet could get an eye or ear infection or get dangerous debris in its eyes or ears.
- When traveling with your pet, familiarize yourself with pet-related restrictions, take along adequate pet supplies, bring your pet's veterinary information and make sure your pet has a sturdy collar, well fitting collar and two tags (a current rabies tag and an identification tag). If you leave your pet at home, research pet sitters or kennels--get recommendations from your veterinarian or friends.
- If you must ship your pet by air during hot weather, send your pet in the early morning or evening when it is cooler and try to avoid peak periods when delays are more likely. Most travel crates have cups for water; fill all of the cups and freeze some so water is still available later in the flight.
- In the summertime our schedules often change; be aware that these changes can affect your pet and could result in temporary housebreaking or other behavioral problems.
- Prevent free access to pools where a pet could get trapped and drown before help arrives. Always closely supervise your pet in a pool, pond or other body of water. Don't presume that your pet can swim; many can't. Pet stores carry pet life vests—like people, your pet should always wear one when on a boat.
- Sea, lake or standing water can give your pet digestive problems and possibly more serious disorders. Bring along water for your pet if you are going to a lake or seashore. Removing tires and draining other items that can collect water around your house will reduce the chances that your pet can access standing water that can make your pet sick.



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- Your pet can get sunburned too, especially those with light colored noses or fur. If your pet is susceptible to sunburn, apply sun block to its nose and the tips of its ears.
- Never clip your pet closely in hot weather, it could get sunburned; its coat is insulation from the heat.
- If it is too hot for you to walk barefoot on a paved surface or sand, it is too hot for your pet's feet too.
- Like people, pets can be allergic to bee or wasp stings or other insect venom. Watch for signs of an allergic reaction (swelling of eyes or lips, hives, unusual lethargy) and be prepared by having a liquid antihistamine on hand (get a recommended brand and dosage from your veterinarian).
- Keep your pet away from poisonous plants; e.g., Azalea, Autumn Crocus, Castor Bean, Foxglove, Kalanchoe, Lily of the Valley, Mushrooms, Oleander, Rhododendron, Rhubarb leaves and Shamrock.
- Lawn and other chemicals, such as fertilizer, rodenticides and insecticides, can be deadly to a pet by accumulating on its body and then being ingested when a pet grooms itself, often by licking its feet. Flea and tick and heartworm preventive products can also be dangerous--only use veterinarian recommended products on your pet and carefully follow the instructions on the package.
- Always keep your pet a safe distance from machinery, such as lawn mowers and hedge trimmers; when filling gas tanks, do it in an area that your pet can't access and clean up spills immediately.
- **If you suspect your pet has been poisoned, call the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at 888-426-4435 (there is a consulting fee) or your local veterinarian or veterinary emergency clinic.** If you know what your pet ingested, have the container at hand when you make the call so the situation can be quickly assessed.
- Warm weather brings out insects, like fleas, ticks and mosquitoes, which can be a threat to your pets by transmitting tapeworm (fleas), Lyme or other debilitating diseases (ticks), and West Nile virus or deadly heartworm (mosquitoes). Daily inspections of your pet for fleas and ticks are important—use a flea comb to find and remove fleas. Spring is the time to speak to your veterinarian about options to protect your pet against these pests; e.g., inoculations, oral and/or topical preventatives. Help control the mosquito population around your home by eliminating standing water, which is a perfect breeding ground for them.
- July 4th is a fun holiday for people, but the loud, strange noises may not be much fun for your pet. Keep your pet safely inside during the festivities and turn on the radio to help drown out the noise and calm your pet. If your pet must be with you, keep it on leash or in a pet carrier.
- Pets need exercise in warm weather, but take precautions to keep your pet from getting overheated—be especially careful with an older pet or a pet that has a short muzzle (Pug, Bulldog, Persian). If walking or hiking with your pet, carry water or ice cubes to hydrate your pet. If your pet gets overheated, slowly reduce its body temperature by moving it to a shady area, applying cool (not ice



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cold) water all over its body, and letting it drink small amounts of cool water or lick ice cubes or ice cream. **If you believe your pet is suffering from heatstroke, getting it to a veterinarian right away could save its life.**

Fall and Winter

- Never leave your pet in a vehicle in cold weather--the car can act as a refrigerator and your pet could freeze to death.
- Antifreeze can be lethal to pets. When putting antifreeze in your vehicle, thoroughly clean up spills immediately and keep your pet away from parking areas—many pets like antifreeze because it has a sweet taste. Consider using less hazardous antifreeze in your vehicle.
- To protect your pet, use screens or other barriers in front of fireplaces, woodstoves and space heaters.
- Never let your pet loose in ice or snow or in a snowstorm. It could become disoriented and get lost.
- Cats will sometimes sleep under the hood of a car for warmth. Bang loudly on the hood and sides of your car before getting into your car to prevent a cat from being injured when the engine starts.
- Never clip your pet closely in cold weather; its fur is insulation from the cold.
- Cold weather saps energy, so provide proper nourishment so your pet can maintain its body weight.
- Provide your pet with a warm, dry place to sleep, away from drafts.
- Puppies, kittens, older or short-coated pets cannot tolerate frigid weather. Consider paper training a puppy until spring, litter box training a small pet or taking a pet outside only long enough for it to relieve itself, and providing a sweater for a short-coated or older pet.
- Inspect your pet carefully when it comes in from outside since salt and chemicals used to melt ice and snow can irritate its feet and be dangerous if ingested when the pet grooms itself. Rinse any suspected chemicals off immediately. To avoid the possibility of injury to your pet, use biodegradable cat litter or pet safe products to melt ice and snow instead of harmful chemicals or salt.
- Halloween, with strangely costumed people at your door, can be scary for pets. Put your pet in a safe area so it won't get frightened and bolt out the door or feel the need to be protective of you.
- Holiday items--ribbon, tinsel, ornaments, some plants, greasy table scraps (like gravy)--can be hazardous to pets. Put your pet in a safe area, or on a leash, when visitors arrive or depart so it can't bolt out the door.