



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

***Summertime Safety Tips for Pets***

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Summer has finally arrived in Vermont! A chance to relax, soak up the sun, enjoy the beautiful Vermont countryside, and have as many creemees as your heart desires. However, there are some important safety tips to keep in mind for your pets.

Excessive heat and increased outdoor activities could spell disaster for your pets. As the mercury rises, take just a few moments to ensure that your pets are safe and prevent an urgent trip to the animal ER with a summertime emergency! The most common heat related problem for pets is heat stroke. Also known as heat stress or hyperpyrexia, heat stroke is a real emergency for dogs. Even on moderately warm days, an excited dog might show a body temperature increase of 2-5 degrees Fahrenheit. Since dogs don't sweat like we do, they are unable to dissipate the excess heat, and heat stroke may soon follow. Any outdoor pet can overheat on a warm summer day, but short-faced breeds, such as Pugs and Bulldogs, are at a higher risk. In addition, every year thousands of pets succumb to heat stroke because they were left in cars while their owners ran "just a few" errands. Many cities and states have now made it a crime to leave your pet unattended in a vehicle. These are important laws as even on a 70-degree day, temperatures inside a car can soar to over 110 degrees in less than one hour!

Always be aware of the weather forecast. Knowing the high temperature can help guide your plans for the day. Don't leave your pet unattended outside or plan heavy exercise on hot, humid days. If your pet is left outdoors, he must have access to adequate shade and fresh water. When it's time to run errands, leave your pet at home. Even a few minutes in a hot car is enough to increase your pet's body temperature dramatically. If you find your pet disoriented, panting excessively or collapsed in the yard, move her immediately to a cooler environment. Use cool wet towels over her back, armpits and groin to help bring her temperature down. Fans are often helpful too. Get her to your veterinarian immediately so that they can assess her status and begin lifesaving treatments.

Some owners try to help their pets by shaving the dog's long coat. Although this seems like a good idea, a well-groomed and clean hair coat can insulate the dog from the heat and help keep them cooler. Veterinarians will recommend shaving specific areas in long haired breeds. In some cases, shaving the hair coat could expose a lightly pigmented dog to potential sunburn. For short haired lightly colored breeds, canine solar dermatitis can be a problem. Boxers, Pit Bulls and Dalmatians are just a few examples of dogs that are at risk. In these cases, chronic exposure to hot sunny days damages the skin and causes tender, red scaly lesions. Eventually, the skin becomes thickened and scarred. There is sunscreen you can purchase for dogs at risk for sunburn and ask your veterinarian for more information on how to protect your pet from the sun. (continued)

When the sun goes down and the temperatures start to cool, your pets still face many summer challenges. The patriotic holidays during the summer months are often preceded by and celebrated with fireworks. The bright flashes and loud bangs are terrifying to some pets and can cause anxiety and stress and they may try to escape. Likewise, some pets react in a similar way to thunderstorms. Normally calm pets may become distressed, destructive and even bite to get away from the noises. While running, they are at risk for being hit by a car, becoming lost or encountering another animal who might be aggressive. If you are planning to take your pets to any outdoor celebrations or cook-outs, find out first if pets are welcome or if fireworks are planned. It might be easier to simply leave the dogs at home rather than risk a run-away or injury.

The warm summer season also brings out many pests that will actively seek out your pets. Fleas and ticks are two examples, but some species of biting flies are very fond of dogs' ears. Repeated bites can cause a condition that can be serious and difficult to control known as "fly strike". All your pets should be on year-round flea and tick and heartworm prevention to help prevent flea infestations, heartworm infection, and tick bites.

Summer is lots of fun and can be for your pets too. Just make sure to follow the tips provided and contact your veterinarian with any questions or concerns.

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