

Summer Pet Tips

Summer and vacation season can pose special problems for pets. Help keep your pet healthy and safe by following these simple tips.

Vacationing – When planning your vacation it will be necessary to decide on your pet's care and whether to leave your pet or take him along. Your pet's personality and the length and distance of your trip are important considerations in making this decision.

Leaving Your Pet Behind – Boarding your pet or hiring a pet sitter are options if you decide to leave your pet behind. In either case, here are some general tips:

- Here at Animal Care Hospital, we offer boarding services. Feel free to visit us to meet our staff and see our facilities.
- Make reservations before your trip, especially in the summer and around holidays.
- Be sure your pet is current on all vaccinations required. For dogs, this includes rabies, canine distemper and parvo, and bordetella. For cats, this includes rabies and feline distemper
- If your pet is on medication, be sure to bring an ample supply and clear, complete instructions. Leave explicit instructions on feeding and a supply of your pet's regular food.
- If hiring a pet sitter, meet the sitter in your home to see how he/she and your pet interact. Be sure to leave information on your veterinarian including office and emergency numbers.

Taking Your Pet Along

- Call ahead to make sure your pet will be welcome at the hotels, homes or parks where you will be staying
- Be sure your pet has all required vaccinations and a current health certificate. Take along his medical record.
- Take along your pet's regular food, any special medications, a supply of water and, if space is available, his bedding and favorite toy(s).
- Be sure your pet has a collar with an identification tag with your name and telephone number (including area code). A microchip can be placed with identifying information and registered in a national database. If your pet is lost, veterinarians and shelters can scan your pet's microchip. A photo of your pet is also important in case he is lost while vacationing. Keep your pet confined in a cage/crate or on a leash at all times.
- If traveling in a vehicle with your pet, it is safest for you and your pet to keep him confined to a carrier. Never let your pet ride with his head out the window or in the back of a trunk.

Heartworm Disease – This mosquito-transmitted disease can be fatal to your dog. Have your dog tested for heartworms by your veterinarian. If your dog's test is negative, ask your veterinarian about heartworm preventatives. It is recommended that dogs be on heartworm preventatives throughout the year, most commonly an oral chewable tablet given monthly. The new topical product Revolution can be applied monthly – this will prevent heartworms, ear mites, sarcoptic mange and intestinal parasites.

Fleas & Ticks – Watch for signs of these parasites that are particularly prevalent during warmer weather. Discuss the various methods of flea and tick prevention and treatment with your veterinarian. Be sure that any product you use is safe for your type of pet. Topical products like Frontline Plus can be applied monthly to prevent fleas and ticks.

If your pet becomes infested with fleas, you must treat your pet and your pet's environment. If you notice a flea problem in your home, be sure to dispose of vacuum cleaner bags after each use. It might become necessary to obtain special products from your veterinarian to rid your home of fleas.

Some ticks can transmit diseases such as Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. Any tick found on your pet should be removed promptly and completely. Using a tissue or tweezers placed next to the skin, gently pull the tick from your pet's skin, making sure to remove the head and mouth parts. Have your veterinarian show you the correct way to remove ticks.

Bites & Stings – Unusual swelling or soreness may be signs of a bite or sting. Contact your veterinarian immediately.

Heat Stress – Any pet can suffer from heat stress. However, particularly susceptible are:

- Very young and older pets
- Pets with a previous history of heat stress
- Overweight pets
- Short-nosed breeds, like bulldogs and pugs
- Pets with cardiovascular or respiratory disorders

Help prevent heat stress by:

- Providing plenty of clean, fresh water for your pet at all times
- Providing adequate ventilation and air circulation when pets are kept in kennels or pens
- Providing shade cover when pets are outdoors and never leaving pets in parked vehicles
- Avoiding excessive exercise of pets during hot weather

Some signs of heat stress are profuse panting and salivation, staring or an anxious expression, failure to respond to commands, warm dry skin, high fever, rapid heartbeat, fatigue, muscular weakness or collapse.

If your pet has heat stress, try to reduce his temperature by gradually immersing your pet in cool water, spraying him with cool water or applying ice packs to his head and neck. Take your pet to the veterinarian immediately.