

## Help Your Dog Beat the Heat This Summer!

### Dr. Ruth MacPete, DVM

Ruth has more than 15 years of experience in the veterinary industry as a companion animal veterinarian in private practice. Along with being a writer and media personality, she is also a founding member of IDEXX's Pet Health Network team.

Dr. Ruth MacPete has some tips to protect your pet from the hot summer sun. For more from Dr. MacPete, find her on [Facebook](#) or at [www.drruthpetvet.com](http://www.drruthpetvet.com)!

Summer is one of the best times of year for people and dogs, but if you're not careful, it can also be a dangerous time for your pup. To make sure everyone has a fun and safe summer, I wanted to remind everyone about some of these common summer dangers.

#### 1. Provide shade to lessen risk of heat exhaustion

Summer is the perfect time to enjoy beautiful parks, beaches, and backcountry trails with your dog. Just make sure you protect them from the potentially dangerous summer heat. Unlike people, dogs and cats can't perspire as efficiently as we do. In order to cool off, they dispel heat by panting and perspire only minimally thru their pads. Unfortunately, this method is less efficient than sweating and your dogs can overheat quickly on a warm day leading to heat exhaustion, commonly known as heat stroke. Be sure your dogs always have access to shade and water. Be extra careful with [brachycephalic](#) or short nose breeds like [Pugs](#), [Bulldogs](#), [Boston Terriers](#), and my favorite, [Boxers](#), as they are even more heat-intolerant than other dogs.

#### 2. Know the signs of heat stroke and what to do

How do you know if your pet is suffering from heat exhaustion? The signs of heat stroke are non-specific. Maintain a high index of suspicion and look for the following:

- Excessive panting
- Bright red tongue and gums
- Vomiting
- Bloody diarrhea

- Unsteadiness
- Collapse
- Seizures

Heatstroke can quickly damage vital internal organs. If you suspect that your pet is suffering from heatstroke, try to cool them down by wetting them with cool water and immediately take them to your veterinarian for additional treatment. Without prompt treatment, heatstroke can be fatal.

#### 3. Beware of walking across hot surfaces

As we all know, pets aim to please and never complain. While this is a noble quality, it can also get them in trouble. Pets will try their best to keep up with you even if they are exhausted. This can be a problem if you take your dog running during the hot summer months. Dogs, like people, can become overheated if they run in the hot midday sun, especially if they are not accustomed to running in those conditions. Running on concrete, asphalt or sand can also be a problem since these surfaces get very hot and can burn a dog's pads. I recommend exercising with your pet in the morning or evening to avoid the possibility of overheating or pad burns. If you have to take your pet out during the day, make sure the ground isn't too hot.

#### 4. Hot cars can be deadly

Most people know they should not leave their pets unattended in a parked car when the weather is hot. What many do not realize is how quickly a park car becomes dangerously hot. Even if the temperature is only 85 degrees and you leave your car windows down, your car can heat up to 102 degrees within 10 minutes (Check out [Dr. Ernie Ward's video](#) to see for yourself). To be safe, never leave your pet in a parked car for any period of time when the weather is warm. Why risk your faithful companion's life? Leave them safely at home if you are going somewhere that doesn't allow pets.

During these hot summer months, protect your pet from heat exhaustion by insuring they have access to shade and water at all times. Never leave them in a parked car or tied outside in the direct sun. Remember, pets are more vulnerable to heat exhaustion than us.

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Hopefully these safety tips will help keep your pets safe so you both can have a wonderful and fun summer.

*If you have any questions or concerns, you should always visit or call your veterinarian – they are your best resource to ensure the health and well-being of your pets.*

