

## Our Top 10 Summer Safety Tips for Dogs

*Help your pooch make the most out of summer*

### Pet Health Network Contributors

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Our pets love summer just as much as we do! For many, it's the best time of year to be out, about, and enjoying all that the season has to offer.

While there is certainly nothing wrong with taking your pet out for [picnics](#), [hikes](#), [swimming](#), or running, keep in mind that warm weather can be dangerous. It's hard for pets to keep cool when the sun is beating down, and animals don't sweat like people do. [Dogs do sweat](#), but not very much, and it does little to cool them off. As you probably know, dogs more commonly cool themselves down through panting. When there is only hot air for a dog to breathe, it's a lot harder for that dog to keep cool. Read on to learn some important summer safety tips for dogs.:

#### 1. Never, ever, EVER leave your dog in a hot car

Okay, you've probably heard this one before, but it's so important that we still decided to list it first. It can take minutes – [yes, MINUTES](#) – for a pet to develop heat stroke and suffocate in a car. Most people don't realize how hot it gets in parked cars. On a 78 degree day, for instance, temperatures in a car can reach 90 degrees in the shade and top 160 degrees if parked directly in the sun! Your best bet is to leave your dog home on warm days. If you're driving around with your dog in the car, bring water and a water dish and take your dog with you when you leave the car.

#### 2. Make sure your dog is protected from parasites like fleas, ticks, and mosquitoes

If not protected, your dog is at risk for [heartworm](#), [Lyme disease](#), [Rocky Mountain spotted fever](#), and a host of other nasty and dangerous [conditions](#). And don't forget, many of these [diseases](#) can be caught by people too!

#### 3. Keep your dog's paws cool

When the sun is cooking, surfaces like asphalt or metal can get really hot! Try to keep your pet off of hot

asphalt; not only can it burn paws, but it can also increase body temperature and lead to overheating. It's also not a good idea to drive around with your dog in the bed of a truck – the hot metal can burn paws quickly (and they can fall out to be [injured or killed in an accident](#)).

#### 4. Your dog should always have access to fresh drinking water and shade

Our [dogs](#) get much thirstier than we do when they get hot, and other than panting and drinking, they really have no way to cool themselves down. Keep your pet in the shade as often as possible. While dogs and cats like to sunbathe, direct sunlight can overheat them (especially dogs) and cause [heat stroke](#).

[Find out how much you know about heat stroke with this quick quiz](#)

#### 5. Give your dog his very own "kiddy pool"

Dogs who love the water, naturally love it even more during the hot months, and getting wet keeps them cool. Providing a small, kid-sized pool will go over big.

#### 6. Don't assume your dog can swim well

Just because dogs instinctively know how to swim, doesn't mean they're good swimmers. And if your dog jumps in your swimming pool, he might not be able to get out without help and could easily drown. Make sure your dog can't get into your swimming pool without you around.

[Read more about water safety here](#)

#### 7. Dogs get sunburns too!

Believe it or not, dogs can sunburn, especially those with short or light-colored coats. And just like with people, sunburns can be painful for a dog and overexposure to the sun can lead to skin [cancer](#). Talk to your [veterinarian](#) about sunscreens for your dog (don't assume a sunscreen for people is appropriate for your dog).

#### 8. If there's no fence, keep your dog on a leash

Summertime means all sorts of exciting sights, scents, critters running around, and new and exciting places to

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explore. You never want to lose your dog because he became distracted in an unfamiliar environment. And remember, not every dog is meant to be off-[leash](#); some dogs just can never be fully trusted to come when called. Make sure you understand your dog's tendencies and err on the side of being overly-cautious.

### 9. Watch your dog's weight

After a long winter, many dogs put on a few extra pounds. Summer is the perfect time to increase his level of [exercise](#) and get in tip-top shape. A pet that maintains a healthy weight throughout his lifetime will live, on average, 2-3 years longer than an overweight pet! [Just make sure not to over-exert your dog](#). Talk to your veterinarian, give him adequate rest and if your dog is especially overweight, make sure you ease him into physical activity.

[Check out "5 Must Ask Questions about Pet Obesity"](#)

### 10. Keep your windows screened!

You may want your house to be ventilated, but you definitely do not want your dog jumping out!

Perhaps the most important tip is to pay attention to your dog – you'll know when he seems uncomfortable. Summer can be a great time to spend with your dog, but it's important to keep these tips in mind! [Be sure to check out our tips for firework safety too](#).

*And as always, make sure you talk with your veterinarian about any questions or concerns you have about your pets in warm summer weather.*