

## Hot Weather Tips for Pets

Texas summer months are generally composed of long and hot days. Dogs and cats, just like their masters, can suffer from the same problems common during these hot periods, mainly overheating, dehydration and even sunburn. However, by taking a few simple precautions you can protect your pet from the elements and you both can enjoy your summer without incident.

- Never leave your pet alone in a vehicle. Even with the windows open, a parked car, truck or van can quickly become a furnace on a hot day; quickly overheating and may result in heat prostration, which can kill an animal. Remember, parking in the shade offers little protection, as the sun shifts during the day.
- Always carry cool water for your pet when engaged in outdoor activities.
- Don't force your animal to exercise after a meal in hot, humid weather. Exercise him in the early morning or in the evening, and keep walks to a minimum.
- Before walking, feel the asphalt yourself, if hot & burning to your touch, do not expect your pet to respond differently. Never leave your dog standing on hot asphalt; his body can heat up quickly and his sensitive paw pads can burn.
- Do not take an animal to the beach unless you can provide a shaded spot and plenty of fresh water for him to drink. Rinse him off after he has been in salt water. If you can sunburn so can your pet.
- Provide plenty of shade and a well-constructed doghouse for animals staying outside. Bring your dog inside during the hottest part of the day, and make sure he has plenty of cool water. Keep cats indoors.
- Be extra sensitive to old and overweight animals in hot weather. Snub-nosed dogs such as Bulldogs, Pugs, Boston Terriers, Lhasa Apsos and Shih Tzus, as well as those with heart or lung diseases, should be kept cool in air conditioned rooms.
- Keep your animal well-groomed to stave off summer skin problems. Shaving a heavy-coated dog's hair to a one-inch length helps prevent overheating. Don't shave the hair down to the skin, or you will rob him of protection from the sun. Cats should be brushed often.
- Remember, animals are not able to sweat like humans do. Dogs cool themselves by panting and by sweating through their paws. Cats will pant if overheated and they sweat through their paw pads, as well. If they have only overheated air to breathe, animals can collapse, suffer brain damage, and possibly die of heatstroke. Just 15 minutes can be enough for an animal's body temperature to climb from normal to deadly levels that will damage the nervous and cardiovascular systems, often leaving the animal comatose, dehydrated, and at risk of permanent impairment or even death.
- Be kind to your pet.