

Canine Summer Safety Tips

from Friends for Life Animal Rescue, Gilbert AZ



Canine Water Safety



There's the step, there it is, there it is, there it is....
-Bella Jean, F4L adoptee

- * Even dogs that love to swim (even those Labs!) must be taught where the pool step or exit is. Test them several times!
- * Don't assume all dogs can swim. The basic doggie paddle might instinctively kick in, but if a dog isn't familiar with water, he may not know how to make the motions quickly enough to keep afloat. (And for some breeds, the doggie paddle doesn't work!)
- * Dogs who are anxious around water may know how to swim, but may panic when they fall into water, forgetting where the step or exit is located. They'll use all their energy trying to pull themselves up over the side with their front legs, become exhausted, and subsequently drown.
- * Consider installing a pool barrier so dogs can't access the pool without supervision.
- * If your dog is getting older, or is overweight, recognize that she may have more trouble in the water than in the past.
- * Even dogs that like to swim can become overly excited and over exert themselves.
- * Rinse your dog after swimming to remove chlorine & allergens.

Oops. Sometimes I leap before I think. Watch me, Dad!
-LeRoy, F4L adoptee



- * Dry your dog after swimming (wet dogs are more susceptible to sunburn).
- * Dry your dog's ears and/or use ear drops after swimming to avoid ear infections.
- * If you take your dog boating, get a doggy life jacket.

"Hey, Joey, our parents rock! They know all boating dogs—big or small—need life jackets!"
-Bella Jean, F4L adoptee

Hot Paws

- * Put your hand on the pavement. If the pavement is too warm for you to rest your hand on comfortably for several minutes, it's too warm for paws.
- * Observe your dog. If he is "dancing" or picking up his feet erratically, his paws are burning.
- * Don't assume wet pavement is any cooler than dry pavement.
- * During the hot summer months, walk your dog only in the very early morning, after dark in the evening, or preferably only on grass surfaces.
- * Consider "boots" for your dog or ask your vet about paw wax to help prevent burning.

Heat Stroke in Dogs

Dog heat stroke requires immediate veterinary care! Panting does not cool dogs well when the outside temperature and body temperature are the same. A dog's normal temp is 103F. Panting becomes less effective the hotter it gets.

Heat stroke can be particularly dangerous if you cannot cool your dog's temperature within 20 minutes.

Cool your dog on the way to the veterinarian by:

- * Running the air conditioning
- * Applying cool wet towels
- * Applying ice packs to the abdomen or groin if you have them
- * Wipe paws with cool water (paws are the only area on a dog that can sweat).
- * The result of not seeking treatment could be kidney failure or brain damage.

(adapted from www.dog-health-guide.org)

Prevent Heat Stroke and Heartbreak...

- * Don't leave your dog in the car in the summer, not even with the window cracked open.
- * A good guideline is to cool your dog or give him water when you need it yourself.
- * Make sure your dog has plenty of shade and water.
- * Exercise your dog only in the very early morning and/or in the water.
- * Observe your dog while exercising. Most dogs want so badly to please that they will keep going even after they are not feeling well. If your dog begins to look disoriented, or start to stagger, those are symptoms of heat stroke!

"I'll always remember a hiker I saw on South Mountain, sobbing, holding his dog in his arms. She had collapsed and died from heatstroke. Don't be that well meaning but heartbroken hiker. Dogs overheat faster than we do."

-A Friends for Life Volunteer

Symptoms

Excessive panting
Salivation
104° body temperature or more
Collapse
Diarrhea
Vomiting
Increased, thumping heart rate
Depression
Stupor or appearing in a daze
Seizures
Coma