

## MANAGING PET'S WELL-BEING IN THE SUMMER: ESSENTIAL TIPS FOR PET OWNERS

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### ABSTRACT

When summer temperatures increase, it is crucial for pet owners to be proactive in protecting the health of their furry friends. This summary provides important strategies and tips for ensuring the well-being and joy of your pets during extreme heat. Responsible pet ownership in summer demands carefulness and attentiveness, including hydration, proper shelter, avoiding hot surfaces, and being able to recognize signs of heat-related illnesses. Pet owners can make sure their cherished animals remain safe and comfortable in the peak of summer.

**Keywords:** Pet, heat stroke, management, pet owners, summer

### I. INTRODUCTION

A significant challenge faced by pet owners all over the world is ensuring the well-being and comfort of their beloved animal friends, as summer days with scorching sun are already here. Although summer offers many opportunities for outdoor activities and bonding between pets and their owners, it also comes with its own challenges. The major one is dealing with the risks associated with heat-related illnesses. Like humans, pets also experience the impact of heat and high humidity on their bodies. Unlike human beings, pets don't have a good mechanism to regulate their body temperature; thus, they become more vulnerable to heat stroke or other ailments related to hot weather. One of the differences is the way in which dogs use panting and a small amount of sweating, mainly through their paw pads, to dissipate heat, yet cats regulate their body temperature by grooming and searching for cooler places. To prevent pets' ill-health in summer, it is important to first comprehend their weaknesses in such conditions and later apply appropriate management strategies that will keep them safe and happy. A significant challenge faced by pet owners all over the world is ensuring the well-being and comfort of their beloved animal friends, as summer days with scorching sun are already here. Although summer offers many opportunities for outdoor activities and bonding between pets and their owners, it also comes with its own challenges. The major one is dealing with the risks associated with heat-related illnesses. Like humans, pets also experience the impact of heat and high humidity on their bodies. Unlike human beings, pets don't have a good mechanism to regulate their body temperature; thus, they become more vulnerable to heat stroke or other ailments related to hot weather. One of the differences is the way in which dogs use panting and a small amount of sweating, mainly through their paw pads, to dissipate heat, yet cats regulate their body temperature by grooming and searching for cooler places. To prevent pets' ill-health in summer, it is important to first comprehend their weaknesses in such conditions and later apply appropriate management strategies that will keep them safe and happy. It is imperative that pet owners address heat-related diseases promptly because, if left unattended, they may

prove fatal. Common symptoms of heat stress are rapid breathing, excessive salivation, lethargy, vomiting, and diarrhoea, and even fainting. Extreme cases can cause organ failure and ultimately death. By recognizing these hazards, pet owners can stay one step ahead and do everything possible to avoid summertime problems with heat in order to protect their pets from the serious effects of the illness (Flournoy *et al.*, 2003; Bruchim and Kelmer, 2018).

Managing pet animals throughout the summer necessitates extra care to ensure their well-being in the summertime. Here are some recommendations for caring for and managing your pet amid the summer months:

## II. ENSURING PROPER HYDRATION AND NUTRITION

Proper hydration is crucial for the overall health and well-being of pets, especially during times of high temperatures. Pet owners need to ensure that their pets have access to clean, fresh water at all times, whether they are inside or outside. Encourage pets to drink water regularly in order to prevent dehydration. Including ice cubes in water bowls or investing in automatic water dispensers with cooling capabilities can help lower water temperatures and promote increased water consumption in pets. In addition, keeping pets hydrated can be achieved by soaking dry food or adding water-rich fruits and vegetables to their diets. In addition to staying well-hydrated, pets need a balanced diet packed with essential nutrients to boost their immune system and stay healthy in the summer. Make sure your pet's diet consists of premium pet food that matches their species, age, and activity level. To prevent health issues related to heat and avoid putting too much strain on the body, it is important not to overfeed. Follow these tips to

**Always provide fresh water:** Always provide your pet with clean, fresh water. Change the water on a regular basis in order to keep it clean and appealing.

**Monitor water intake:** Be observant of the amount of water your pet drinks, as a higher intake could indicate dehydration or other health issues.

**Outdoor water sources:** If your pet goes outside often, make sure water is available in multiple spots for easy access.

**Traveling:** If you are taking your pet on a summer trip, make sure to bring sufficient water to keep them hydrated, particularly if you will be away from home for a long time.

**Adjust for size and species:** Various types of pets need varying amounts of water. Bigger animals, especially those with dense fur, might need increased amounts of water to remain hydrated.

**Consider water-rich foods:** Include foods with high water content in your pet's diet, like moist food for dogs and cats.

**Offer water-rich treats:** During warm weather, offer your pet frozen treats or ice cubes created using water or low-sodium broth to assist them in remaining cool and properly hydrated (Flournoy *et al.*, 2003; Hall *et al.*, 2021).

## III. SHADE AND SHELTER

An essential part of caring for pets in the summer is ensuring they have suitable shelter and shade to shield them from the sun's damaging rays. It is essential to offer shady spots for your pet to escape the sun whether they are indoors or outdoors most of the time. Below are a few suggestions on how to offer shade and protection for your pet during the summer months:

**Outdoor shelter:** Provide a shaded area for your pet to seek refuge from the sun while spending time outdoors. Dogs that spend time outdoors should have access to well-ventilated shelters like dog houses, cat condos, or enclosed aviaries. These shelters should have proper insulation and ventilation to ensure the

dogs stay cool and comfortable. Offering raised structures like hammocks or perches enables pets to avoid hot surfaces and enjoy fresh air.

**Natural shade:** Utilize trees, shrubs, or other elements from nature to establish shaded areas in your garden where your pet can unwind and stay cool. Remember that the location of the sun changes during the day, so make sure there is shade accessible at all times.

**Portable shade:** When you travel with your pet, remember to bring a portable shade structure like a pop-up canopy or umbrella to offer shade on the go. This could be particularly advantageous for outdoor events or activities.

**Cooling mats or pads:** Put cooling mats and cushions in shaded spots for your pet to rest on. These items are designed to soak up and reduce heat, making a cozy space for your pet to unwind.

**Indoor shelter:** Indoor pets can be more comfortable if their beds or resting spots are placed away from direct sunlight, and curtains or blinds can help keep them cool by blocking out too much heat. Make sure your pet can go inside to a cool, shaded area during the hottest part of the day. Utilize fans or air conditioning to maintain a comfortable temperature.

**Monitor temperature:** Keep an eye on the temperature both indoors and outdoors to ensure it is safe for your pet. Even if your pet has access to shade, do not leave them in situations where it becomes extremely hot.

**Avoid hot surfaces:** Make sure to prevent your pet from coming into contact with hot surfaces like pavement, roads, or beaches, as these can cause burns on their feet. Take your pet for a stroll on the grass, or put on booties for protection if needed.

**Never leave pets in a parked car:** Leaving the windows open in a parked car does not prevent

the temperature inside from quickly rising to dangerous levels, potentially leading to heatstroke or even death (Gregory and Constantine,1996, Hall *et al.*,2020; Hall *et al.*,2021).

#### **IV. REGULAR GROOMING**

Ensure your pet stays groomed throughout the summer season. During the summer months, grooming becomes vital for maintaining pets' health and well-being, as they are more prone to certain illnesses due to heat and increased outdoor activity. Here are a few important factors explaining why pet grooming is crucial, especially in the summer months:

**Coat maintenance:** Regularly grooming your pet is crucial for getting rid of their loose fur, dirt, and debris from their coat, especially important in the summer when they shed. Getting rid of excess fur can prevent tangling and matting, which can trap heat under the skin and lead to discomfort and irritation. By ensuring your pet's fur is clean and groomed, you can improve air circulation to the skin, leading to better heat dispersal and assisting your pet in staying cool during warm weather. Cutting long or thick fur can also offer additional relief from the heat.

**Tick and flea prevention:** Regular grooming allows you to check for and eliminate fleas and ticks before they become an issue, as these pests are more prevalent during the summer. Using the flea and tick repellents prescribed by your veterinarian is essential to safeguard your pet from these pests.

**Ear cleaning:** Moisture and humidity, especially in animals with droopy ears or long hair around their ears, can worsen ear infections in pets. Regularly cleaning your pet's ears can prevent discomfort and ear infections by getting rid of wax and debris build-up.

**Dental care:** Maintaining good oral health for pets is important throughout the year, but becomes even more crucial in the summer due

to higher water intake and increased outdoor play that can lead to dental issues. Regular brushing and dental care can prevent gum disease, tooth decay, and bad breath (Flournoy et al.,2003; Bruchim and Kelmer,2018).

## V. ROUTINE EXERCISE

Pets require regular physical activity to preserve their overall well-being, both physically and mentally. However, it is vital to prevent them from overheating and getting tired, particularly in the summer season. During physical activity, owners should always watch for signs of heat stress in their pets, like heavy breathing, slobbering, or hesitancy to keep going, and promptly cool them off if necessary. Here are some important summer workout tips for pets.

**Morning and evening walks:** To prevent overheating, walk your dog during the cooler hours of the early morning or late evening. Remember to bring water so your dog can stay hydrated during the walk.

**Swimming:** If your dog enjoys swimming and you reside close to a safe body of water like a dog-friendly beach or a swimming pool, think about incorporating swimming sessions into their fitness routine. Dogs can engage in gentle swimming to stay cool during the hot months.

**Interactive play:** If your dog enjoys swimming and you reside close to a safe body of water like a dog-friendly beach or a swimming pool, think about incorporating swimming sessions into their fitness routine. Dogs can engage in gentle swimming to stay cool during the hot months (Macintire DK,1999; Magazini,1979).

## VI. WATCH FOR SIGNS OF HEATSTROKE

Heatstroke can be deadly for pets. It occurs when a pet is subjected to intense temperatures and humidity, causing their body temperature to reach dangerous levels. Even with precautions, pets can still experience

heatstroke or heat stress in hot weather. Pet owners must promptly recognize these situations in their pets and take action to calm them down.

**Recognize the signs:** Identify signs of heatstroke in pets such as excessive drooling, rapid panting, increased heart rate, weakness, fatigue, throwing up, diarrhoea, passing out, or seizures. Act quickly to assist your pet in cooling off if you suspect they are suffering from heatstroke, and seek advice from a vet.

**Move to a cooler area:** Immediately move your pet to a cool, shady, or air-conditioned area to prevent them from being exposed to more heat. If you're outdoors, find a shaded spot indoors or under a tree.

**Cooling measures:** To lower your pet's body temperature gently, use cold water. To enhance evaporation, you can dampen their fur with cool (not cold) water and gently fanning motion. Avoid using ice packs or ice water as they may constrict blood vessels and worsen the situation.

**Offer water:** To assist your pet in getting hydrated, urge them to drink small quantities of tepid water. If your pet cannot drink water, keep them cool by moistening their mouth with water.

**Use wet towels or cloths:** Use damp towels or cloths on your pet's body, focusing on areas with less hair such as the groin, underarms, and paw pads. To maintain your pet's body temperature, regularly change the warm towels with fresh, cold ones.

**Use a fan:** Position a fan so that it directs airflow towards your pet to enhance ventilation and promote evaporative cooling. Ensure the fan is not positioned in a way that blows air directly towards your pet in order to prevent them from getting annoyed.

**Monitor body temperature:** To monitor your pet's temperature, utilize a rectal thermometer. When their body temperature reaches around

39.4°C (103°F), discontinue cooling to avoid hypothermia caused by excessive cooling.

**Seek veterinary care:** It is essential to bring your pet to the veterinarian promptly, even if the initial cooling methods improve your pet's condition. Heatstroke can lead to internal organ damage and other consequences that may not be immediately apparent (Johnson *et al.*, 2006; Bruchim and Kelmer, 2018).

## VII. CONCLUSION

As pet guardians, it is our responsibility

to ensure the overall health and wellness of our animals, in addition to providing them with food and shelter, especially during challenging seasons such as summer. By understanding our pets' vulnerability to heat-related illnesses and taking proactive steps, we can ensure their safety and enjoyment during the summer months. It is highly important to protect our dogs from the harmful effects of summer heat by providing shelter, water, adjusting exercise routines, and watching for signs of heat stress.

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