

## Keeping Your Pet Cool in Summer

Temperatures are heating up! This season is perfect for getting out and about with your furry friend, however we need to be prepared to protect our pets from the harsh summer sun. Now the sun is obviously a worry for us when we are spending a day at the beach, a picnic in the park or an extra-long walk in the sunshine. Many pet parents forget that even when their pet is outside on a normal day, that the heat can affect them just as much. We have collected a few handy tips that you can use on a hot day, to keep your pet cool and safe in the sunshine.

Walkies do not need to stop in the warmer season, instead it is the time of the walk that needs to change. Aim to take your pet for a walk either early in the morning before the sun has fully risen or in the evening. This can prevent your pet from collapsing, becoming dehydrated or causing any burns to their paws. **TOP TIP: We recommend using the Five Second Rule before taking your pet outside. Simply place the back of your hand on the ground for five seconds. If it is too hot for your hand, then it is definitely too hot for your pet's paws.**

Never leave your pet in any vehicle, this includes a ute. Regardless of whether the car is in the shade or you have left a window down for your pet, this is a very dangerous situation. In a ute, your pet will burn their paws and bodies on the trays. Your pet can become dehydrated and collapse from heat stress, both of which can result in death. Pets die in hot cars.

Just like us, our pets need plenty of cool water during the summer time. This can be placed in large containers in a shady spot. A back up supply of water can also be provided to our furry friends in case one spills or evaporates. **TOP TIP: Adding some ice cubes to the water can help keep it cooler for longer.**

Everyone enjoys a dip in the pool when we are in need of refreshment! This doesn't exclude our pets. Buying a plastic clam/shell pool to place outside works perfectly to provide our pets with a place to cool down. Of course, it would be best to find a place in the shade to pop this pet pool.

We need to slip, slop and slap the sunscreen on our fair-skinned pets just like we do for humans. Especially for our furry friend's little noses! They can become pink and sunburnt, which is quite uncomfortable for your pet. Getting sunburnt can also increase their chances of developing skin cancer. The sun can be very dangerous so when you lather your sunscreen on, remember to do the same for your pet. If you would like to use sunscreen on your pet, there are special sunscreens available for animals. You can chat to our clinic team about this sunscreen next time you visit us. Alternatively, keeping pets inside and out of the sun, is always the safest option, especially if they have pink skin or a white coat!

Pets don't sweat like we do, so they rely on other methods such as panting, to lower their body temperature. If your pet is having some trouble cooling down, effective but not sudden cooling is key. Try covering them with wet towels or spraying them with cool water. Adding some ice packs under their mat or blankets and even making some frozen treats can help. This can include making their Kong and putting it in the fridge to set.

Heatstroke is a life-threatening condition caused by elevation in temperature and can result from exposure to high temperatures with inadequate precautions. Some signs of heatstroke include excessive panting and saliva, purple or red gums, distress and collapsing. Unfortunately, it is all too often fatal,

especially in brachycephalic breeds (those with a short nose like Pugs, Bulldogs, Boston Terriers etc) because they can't cool themselves as effectively through panting. If you do suspect heatstroke start cooling them immediately with wet towels or spray them with cool (but not cold) water on your way to the vet.

Time to enjoy this wonderful warm weather, in the most safe and relaxing way possible!