



Paw Prints

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Columnist

The hidden dangers of summertime

You've got Rover protected from fleas and ticks for the summer so now it's time to take him on that camping trip with your family. However, there's a whole heap more in Central Oregon that can harm Rover besides fleas and ticks.

Your furry friend may love to run through the creek and lap up water, but there is danger: the tiny intestinal protozoa giardia is found in nearly all streams, rivers, ponds and lakes in Central Oregon.

A dog can acquire giardia by ingesting an infected cyst in the water through another animal's poop; the most common route of transmission is through feces-contaminated

water. Giardia parasites prefer cool, moist environments.

Your dog probably enjoys running through the tall grasses, which happens to include cheat grass. Cheat grass is sneaky and enters body cavities (particularly ears, nose and even under eyelids) and penetrates skin between toes and elsewhere on the body causing irritation and infection. If Rover starts shaking his head a lot after a hike, he could have cheat grass in his ears. Have your veterinarian check him over.

Cheatgrass is recognizable by its drooping, wheat-like seed heads, and its nothing new to Central Oregonians. This year, however, after a wet winter and spring there are thicker patches of the grass according to Deschutes County Forester Ed Keith.

Common lawn and garden mushrooms are poisonous to dogs. They can cause seizure-like behavior in dogs that ingest them. Mushrooms in yards should be removed promptly before your furry friend notices them. If your dog becomes ill, and you suspect mushroom ingestion, call your veterinarian immediately.

You've been playing ball outdoors in the yard with your dog for only 15 minutes on a very warm sunny

day; suddenly Rover begins to pant heavily and starts to vomit. You had forgotten how hot it was outside since you were wearing shorts and sandals. Lucky for you that Rover began to cool down once you brought him inside the house in the air-conditioning and began to get hydrated with a big bowl of water.

Summer can be a very dangerous time for your pets, and the biggest danger to your furry friend during the summer is something you can't see, smell or hear. Heat stroke is a common occurrence in dogs. Most people won't recognize the early warning signs that a dog is suffering from heat exhaustion, which left untreated, leads to heat stroke and ultimately death.

Dehydration can happen as a result of overheating. Be sure your dog has access to plenty of water, whether you are out playing with him or he is left alone when you are running errands, since it's too hot to take him in the car with you.

Your dog needs to be kept hydrated always.

Remember: if you're hot, your furry friend is even hotter. Providing shade, shelter and fresh water to your dog when he is outside is extremely important during



PHOTO BY JODI SCHNEIDER MCNAMEE

Cheatgrass is especially thick in Central Oregon this year.

the summer.

Remember to supervise your dog, no matter where he is or how well you might think he is trained, you need to keep an eye on your pooch. There are too many unknown hazards that could hurt him whether playing ball in a park or just clowning around by the river.

Living in a forested area can lead to encounters with wildlife, even in your own backyard. Coyotes and

mountain lions actively seek dogs as prey in Central Oregon, even in some residential areas. Small pets are particularly vulnerable, and some coyotes may be bold enough to hunt during the day. Deterring the presence of coyotes by not feeding deer or other wildlife are effective preventive strategies.

There are lots of mule deer

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