



# Paw Prints

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Columnist

## Hidden dangers of summertime for your pet

You've got your dog protected from fleas and ticks for the summer so now it's time to take him on a 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; 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 cheatgrass. Cheatgrass is recognizable by its drooping, wheat-like seed heads, and it's nothing new to Central Oregonians.

Cheatgrass 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 cheatgrass in his ears. Have your veterinarian check him over.

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 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 the summer.

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.

Mule deer are common in Central Oregon, and you will find them in your backyard, especially when you have a delicious garden. Both does and bucks will aggressively attack dogs, especially when fawns are present in the summer months. Attacks on dogs by deer can result in fractures, internal injuries, and death.

You and your furry friend may want to cool down at the beautiful Oregon Coast to have fun in the sun and water, but dehydration can occur when your pooch is right next to the water. Remember that the ocean water contains salt, and salt water can be harmful to animals. Ingesting the salt increases dehydration,



PHOTO BY JODI SCHNEIDER

Summertime is fun – but you have to watch out for dangers from heat to giardia in lakes and streams.

because it draws water into the intestines. Salt water can also cause vomiting and diarrhea, and lead to bigger problems, if your dog doesn't get clean fresh water. Dogs, just like humans, can also get sunburn, which can lead to skin cancer. If Rover has light-colored fur on the nose or ears, they are more susceptible to skin cancer. Keep him inside if possible, during the hottest part of the day.

Backyard barbecues can be fun, but sometimes Rover can be quicker than you think and grab a piece of meat, like a chicken leg off the table in no time. It doesn't matter whether they're from chicken wings or pork ribs, cooked meat bones cause all sorts

of problems, especially if they get lodged in the mouth, throat or esophagus. Make sure your guests have somewhere to dispose of their carnivorous waste well out of your pooch's way.

Keep an eye on your dog and don't leave him unattended. It's important to exercise common sense and proceed with caution to help keep your dog safe, like any other member of the family. Summertime comes with its own set of hazards, so make sure you are familiar with the risks. Learn what warning signs mean trouble and when in doubt, call your veterinarian right way. The summer will be much easier for you and your dog to enjoy!

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