



# All About Pets

## HELP YOUR PET

## BEAT THE HEAT



COURTESY PHOTOS

On hot days, which can be especially dangerous to animals, pets should be allowed to relax indoors with water.

**E**xtrême heat can be unpleasant for anyone, and pets are no exception. While it's easy for people to detect if their bodies are responding negatively to heat, those warning signs may not be so prevalent in pets, who may suffer in silence as the heat continues to rise.

Pet owners must pay special attention to their pets on hot days, which the Humane Society of the United States notes can be both uncomfortable and dangerous for pets. In an effort to help pet owners protect their pets from the summer heat, the HSUS offers the following tips to pet owners who want to keep their pets cool and safe this summer.

- Don't leave pets in a

parked car. The temperature inside a vehicle can quickly approach dangerous levels on hot days, so pet owners should never leave their pets in parked cars, even if they leave the air conditioning on and the engine running. On an 85-degree day, temperatures inside cars with slightly cracked windows can reach 102 degrees in as little as 10 minutes. Rather than taking pets with you on car trips, leave them at home inside a comfortably air conditioned room where they won't be vulnerable to rising temperatures.

- Change pet's exercise regimen. Pet owners who make sure their pets get daily exercise should change such routines when temperatures are on the rise. Midday walks or jogs should be switched to evenings or early mornings, when temperatures tend to be at their most moderate. In addition, cut back on the time spent exercising, as pets may have trouble breathing on hot days. When taking your dog for a jog or a run in the summertime, do so on the grass, avoiding asphalt, as hot

asphalt can do significant damage to your pet's paws.

- Be mindful of your breed. Dog owners should recognize that certain dogs can handle the heat better than others. Short-nosed breeds have a harder time in extreme heat because their shorter airways don't allow as much time for the air they breathe in to cool as dogs with longer noses. In addition, the HSUS points out that dogs with white-colored ears are more susceptible to skin cancer than other dogs, making it imperative that owners of such dogs reduce their exposure to the sun on hot days when the UV index is especially dangerous.

- Let dogs inside. Doghouses might not be as prevalent as they once were, but many owners still keep doghouses in their backyards so their four-legged friends have a place to relax outdoors on lazy afternoons. But doghouses can be similar to parked cars on especially hot days, making rising temperatures feel even hotter. Let dogs hang out inside in an air conditioned room on hot days to reduce their risk of heatstroke.

- Learn to recognize the signs of heatstroke. Pets suffering from heatstroke will exhibit certain symptoms, and pet owners who learn to recognize those symptoms can do something about them before it's too late. Heavy panting, glazed eyes, rapid heartbeat, difficulty breathing, excessive thirst, and

lack of coordination are just a few potential indicators that a pet is suffering from heatstroke. Animals that are very old, very young, overweight or unaccustomed to prolonged exercise, as well as those who have heart or respiratory conditions, are especially susceptible to heatstroke.

Extreme heat can be dangerous to pets, who often suffer in silence when dealing with the consequences of extreme heat. Pet owners who take certain precautions and learn to recognize signs of a pet struggling with heat can better protect their animals from succumbing to rising temperatures.

## Today's pets go green

Environmentally conscious life-styles are a way of life for many people. But while men and women may look to hybrid cars or energy-saving appliances to reduce their carbon footprints, few may know they can go green with their pets, too.

There are many ways pet owners can take a more eco-friendly approach to caring for their pets.

- Buy environmentally friendly toys and supplies. When buying toys and supplies for your furry friends, look for products made from recycled materials or natural fibers. Such products may even be packaged in post-consumer materials like recycled paper.

- Buy in bulk. Buying pet items in bulk can be both eco-friendly and convenient. Buying in bulk means less frequent trips to the store, which conserves fuel and saves you time. It also means less packaging, which conserves resources and leads to less plastic and cardboard in landfills.

- Keep a watchful on your pets. Pets that are allowed to roam free can have an adverse impact on local wildlife. For example, cats that are allowed out to roam your yard and the yards of your neighbors may be on the prowl for birds, and killing birds can have a negative impact on local ecosystems. Each bird death caused by a cat is preventable if pet owners simply keep their feline friends inside, which veterinarians note is good for the average cat's life expectancy. In addition, keep your dog on a leash when going for a walk or to the park, as dogs also are prone to some questionable behavior when off the leash and out from under the watchful eyes of their owners.

- Embrace organic foods. Many humans are turning to organic-only diets, and there is no reason why pet owners can't let their four-legged friends in on the fun. Certified organic pet foods are created without the use of any harmful pesticides, hormones and artificial ingredients, making them healthier for the family dog or cat and the planet.

- Clean up in an eco-friendly way. Cleaning up after your pet has done his business is perhaps the least enjoyable part of pet ownership. But dog owners can make picking up their pooches' poop more eco-friendly by using biodegradable poop bags in lieu of plastic bags from the grocery store or elsewhere. Plastic bags will sit in landfills for years to come, while biodegradable bags will decompose over time. Cat owners can also make cleaning up after their pets more eco-friendly and healthy for their furry friends by using environmentally friendly cat litters that don't contain strip-mined clay or clay sediment that can contribute to feline respiratory problems.

There are many ways eco-conscious pet owners can reduce their carbon footprints without expending much effort at all.



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