



Dog-and-Cat Days of Summer

Summer is the time for both you and your pet to bask in the warm months ahead. Here are some tips by Purina® Chief Veterinarian Dr. Kurt Venator to help keep them safe, so you can focus on all the fun you'll have together.

Keep it cool. Though you may be tempted to take your pet with you on the road, the inside of your car can reach 120° F in a matter of minutes, even in the shade. It's best to leave them at home where they'll stay cool and relaxed.

Keep them hydrated. If you do take them out in the hot weather, make sure to pack a portable water bowl and plenty of cold water for your pets. Make sure your dog drinks water every hour to keep them well hydrated.

Don't forget the treats. Keep treats on hand for a quick snack, like the new **Purina® Beggin' Crunch!** treats which are great for on the go. For some pets, ice cubes in a bowl are also a great treat on a hot summer day.



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PROTECT YOUR PETS IN THE SUMMER

A few precautions will help your furry friends safely enjoy the warm weather with you.

■ **HEAT** First and foremost, watch for heat exhaustion, which starts with heavy panting and lethargy and can progress to vomiting. Wetting a dog's feet with room-temperature (not cold) water can help cool it down, says Gary Richter, M.S., D.V.M., medical director of Montclair Veterinary Hospital and Holistic Veterinary Care in Oakland, CA.

Another hazard: hot pavement, which can burn paws in minutes. If you can't keep your feet on the pavement for more than a few seconds, neither can your pet. Try to keep walks to naturally cool grass or dirt trails. If you have to hit the pavement, try booties or socks made for hot weather. And never leave a pet in the car. "In just 15 minutes, pets can overheat in a car and die from heatstroke," Richter says.

■ **SUN EXPOSURE** A fur coat means your dog can't get a sunburn, right? "All dogs can get burned," says Stacy L. Eckman, D.V.M., clinical assistant professor at Texas A&M. "Those with a thick coat are more likely to get burned on the nose or around the eyes." Pets with light or pink skin and short, thin hair have the greatest risk of exposure. Cats can also burn, especially on the ear tips, nose, and forehead. Apply pet sunscreen (the human kind can be toxic) on areas with thin or no hair, and consider a T-shirt for dogs with light skin.

■ THUNDERSTORMS AND FIREWORKS

A double-pronged approach helps calm a pet's stress response. First, set up a soothing room where you can take your pet when storms and fireworks happen. Play white noise (like a fan) and spritz natural calming sprays made for dogs and cats. Some dogs do well with anxiety wraps, which apply gentle pressure on certain parts of the body.

Long-term, you can work on desensitizing your pet. Start by playing a recording of fireworks or thunder at the lowest level and pair it with getting a treat or playing a game. In your next session, increase the volume slightly. Continue for the next several weeks, gradually upping the volume.

Prescription medication is also an option, although you have to administer it 30 minutes to one hour before the noise starts for it to be effective. ■