

Folly Road Animal Hospital

June  July

This Month: Summertime Safety!

Heatstroke

One dangerous hazard of summer to pets is heatstroke. Heatstroke in dogs and cats is defined as a core body temperature over 106°F. It can result in brain damage, intravascular clotting, hemorrhaging, kidney failure and death, and can occur both in spring and fall as well as summer.

While all pets should be closely monitored in the summer months, some are more susceptible to heatstroke and should be watched carefully. Older pets, those with long, thick coats, pets with heart problems, overweight pets, and breeds with short noses, such as pugs, bulldogs, boxers, and pekingese, are all more susceptible to overheating and heatstroke than most breeds. In general, cats can conserve water more easily than dogs, and will even lay out in the sun on a warm day, but this does not mean that they are immune from heatstroke.

Possibly two of the most important things you can provide your pet during the summer hours when they are outside are shade and water. Water should always be kept fresh and cool – ice chips are a great way to keep water cool and keep your pet interested in drinking. A collapsible water bowl or tupperware container with frozen water is ideal for walks or days on the beach; dogs can lick the ice as it melts and closing the tupperware container reduces spills. Many people will leave their pet on a chain outside in the summer months, but you must make sure that the lead is long enough for them to reach some shade and water. Beware of posts, garden fences, and other objects that the leads may get caught on and keep the dog in the direct sunlight with no access to shade or water. Also, remember that unsupervised chained dogs have been known to accidentally strangle themselves.

The most common cause of heatstroke is people leaving their pets in the car while they run a quick errand. The temperature in a parked car will rise very quickly. Have you ever left your perfectly cool, air conditioned car for a quick trip into the grocery store for milk, only to come back to a sweltering car a few minutes later? In six minutes a car can heat up to 120°F, even on a mild spring day with the windows cracked! Dogs and cats cannot open the door or turn on the air conditioner. They also cannot sweat – an important way humans lower their body temperature quickly. In fact, the only way a dog or cat can lower its body temperature is by panting, and this only works when the temperature of the air surrounding them is lower than the core temperature of the body. In a 120°F car with 90% humidity, the only thing panting does is help to raise the temperature and humidity in the car!

Symptoms of Heatstroke:

- Excessive panting and salivation.
- Unsteady or swaggering gait.
- Deep red or purple tongue.
- Muscle tremors.
- Glazed eyes.
- Rapid pulse.
- Vomiting.

What to do for heatstroke:

- Move your pet into the shade and apply cool (not cold) water on the body to gradually lower the body temperature.
- Apply ice packs or cold towels to your pet's head, neck, and chest only.
- Let your pet drink small amounts of water or lick ice cubes.
- Take your pet to the vet immediately!

Other Summertime Safety Tips

Identification: Always have a collar and ID on your pet, or get your pet micro-chipped (unlike collars that can slip off, microchips will always be with your pet). Doors will be open more often and for longer periods of time as the weather warms up, and people will be taking more walks with their pets. Keeping an ID on your pet can make the difference between finding and losing your favorite furry friend.

Heartworm/flea prevention: Summer is peak season for both fleas and heartworms! Keeping up with monthly prevention for both will keep your pet free of fleas and healthy for the entire summer. For more information on fleas, ticks, and heartworms, ask us for a copy of our April and May newsletters.

Pickup Trucks: It is illegal in some states to drive with a dog in the bed of a pickup truck without a restraint. Flying debris, falls from sudden braking or turns, and car accidents can all be dangerous, and dogs have even been known to jump out of moving vehicles. Place the animal into a harness or crate secured to the middle of the bed or let them ride in the cab. Road debris and dust blown at highway speeds has also been known to create eye problems.

Also make sure that if your dog is sticking its head out the window of your car that you lock the automatic windows, otherwise your dog could step on the controls and close his head in the window!

Water Safety: Pets around pools should always have supervision! Never allow your pet free access to the pool – they could fall in and not be able to pull themselves back out of the slippery side. They can become fatigued and drown, especially if they are a puppy who hasn't learned to swim yet. Life preservers for dogs should always be worn on boats, just in case of an accident or storm that could sweep the dog over the side, injuring it in the process.

Be careful when out on walks; dogs may drink from puddles or ditches which can introduce harmful bacteria or other diseases. Saltwater can also make a dog sick if ingested; it can lead to brain swelling, seizures and death when fresh water is reintroduced. Be sure that on walks and at the beach you provide plenty of fresh water.

Chemicals: Plant food, fertilizers and insecticides are all commonly used in the summer months and are fatal to dogs and cats in small quantities. But it's not just the garden chemicals that are toxic; many plants (over 700 species!) can be toxic when ingested as well! Make sure you keep your yard free of these potentially dangerous plants, or restrict access to your pets. Antifreeze is also toxic, and especially dangerous because of its sweet taste.

Concerts/Fairs: Large crowds, loud noises, plenty of distractions and an unforgiving sun can all spell disaster for a pet. While art fairs, concerts, and other large functions are great fun for humans, dogs don't enjoy art, or carnival rides, or loud music, and can become stressed at these types of affairs, especially if they are not given enough breaks for water and shade throughout the day. Fourth of July fireworks displays are extremely stressful and dangerous for dogs, and many would most likely appreciate being left at home so they can feel safe and comfortable when the loud noises begin.

Dog Bites: With more dogs and humans (especially children) being outside together in the summer, dog bites are more common. Keep your dog on a leash, and keep them updated on vaccines (especially rabies) to prevent any problems.

Travel: Traveling with pets can be difficult, but when executed correctly can be a fun time for both owners and pets alike! Always be sure to keep two ID tags on your pet at all times – one with the address of your home, and one with your destination.

If traveling by plane, call the airline for information on flying with your pet, including the type of crate you will need, where the pet will be stored (some baggage compartments can get too hot or cold, and the pressure changes can negatively affect your pet) and any health certificates you might need. See your veterinarian if you think you might need tranquilizers.

If traveling by car, stop frequently for exercise and water, let your pet chew on ice chips throughout the ride to keep it cool and hydrated, give them a light meal a few hours before to stave off car sickness, and make sure to double-check that any hotels you are staying at are pet friendly. If your dog or cat will be staying in the hotel room while you are out, make sure to crate them with plenty of water and notify the staff that they will be staying behind for the day. It is considered rude to leave a barking dog in a hotel room alone all day.

No matter where you are going and how you are getting there, make sure you research veterinarians in the area and have a copy of your records ready just in case of an emergency. It may save you precious time later.

For more information on traveling with pets, check out the following articles online:
<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/4626791/> and <http://www.takeyourpet.com/pages/free.htm>
Looking for pet-friendly hotels? Try <http://www.pets-allowed-hotels.com/> or contact your local AAA office.

Sunburn: Many people believe dogs and cats are not susceptible to sunburn and skin cancer, but that is far from the truth. White or light colored dogs and cats are very susceptible to sunburn, especially around their ears and nose. Pet sunscreen can be purchased at your local specialty pet shop, baby-safe sunscreen can be used in a pinch, and pure aloe vera can be used for sunburns.

Success Story: Gunther!

Gunther, a ten year old male rottweiler, presented to the FRAH because he was ADR (ain't doin' right). A physical exam revealed pale gums and a distended abdomen. Radiographs revealed a large abdominal mass and lab tests revealed a profound anemia. There was some concern about performing surgery right away due to the severe anemia. So, some medicines were prescribed and Gunther was sent home to recuperate before an exploratory surgery was to be done.

However, Gunther did not agree with this plan, collapsing to the floor while he was being discharged! Dr. Sheridan canceled some afternoon appointments, performed a blood transfusion and anesthetized Gunther for an exploratory surgery. A splenic mass the size of a cantaloupe was removed, and further tests confirmed that it was benign.

Gunther continues to gain strength and has been feeling much better!

Dates, Upcoming News, Specials:

The FRAH currently has dogs and kittens for adoption! Call or stop by the clinic for more information.

New special: buy 10 doses of Revolution and get two free! That is a year's worth of heartworm and flea protection for a ten-month price!

We also carry Tri-Heart Plus, a cheaper alternative to Heartgard heartworm prevention.

Can't get rid of those pesky fleas? Try Capstar! An easy-to-administer pill that works for 24 hours to kill all the adult fleas that bite your pet. When used in combination with Frontline or Revolution, it can help you get the head-start you need to control the fleas.

Taking off for the Fourth of July? Remember to call ahead to book your dog's space in our kennel! Busy summer weekends book up fast.

Want more information on Heatstroke in pets? Visit <http://www.thepetcenter.com/gen/hs.html>

Kittens!

The Folly Road Animal Hospital has kittens available for adoption! They are 8 weeks old, one orange and one grey, both very playful and friendly. Both are males and have been neutered, and are ready to go home today! Stop by to see these little cuties if interested!