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# Precautions to take during the dog days of summer

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July 04, 2015 10:49 am • by Wilda Lyons / Coalition for Pet Protection

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“Whew! It’s a hot one today!”

That phrase has been spoken quite a bit recently. Hot and humid weather is here for the next few months. It is important to take extra care to help reduce the dangers to your pet during this time. Using common sense can go a long way to keep your pet safe.

### Running errands?

Running errands? Leave your pet at home! Animals left in hot cars can lead to tragic results. Think you will be in the store for “just a minute”? Temps in a car, even with the windows down, can increase very fast.

Outside temps are 80 degrees, and inside of a car can become 99 degrees within 10 minutes. Within 30 minutes an animal left in these conditions may suffer irreversible organ damage, or death. Even leaving the car running with the air conditioning on is not safe.

The Humane Society of the U. S. recommends that if you see a cat or dog in a car, and the owner can’t be found, call the local animal control or police non-emergency number. Stay by the car until help comes.

### High humidity

High humidity also causes special concerns. Animals pant to evaporate moisture from their lungs. This takes heat away from their body. When humidity is high, animals are unable to cool themselves and their internal temperature will skyrocket to dangerous levels very quickly.

Symptoms of heat stroke can include heavy panting, glazed eyes, rapid heartbeat, and difficulty breathing. Old, very young and pets with other medical issues are more susceptible to the heat. If you think your pet has heatstroke, get them to a cool area, cool them with ice packs or cool towels, provide cool drinking water, and get them to the vet’s office immediately.

### Limit exercise

Limit exercise on very hot and humid days. Early morning and late evening dog walks are the best times to be out. If an animal has to be outside, monitor closely.

Provide plenty of cool water, and shade. Wading pools are great ways to have water on hand. Avoid house shelters ... they provide no relief, and can actually make it worse for the animal. Tree shade and tarp shelters are a better solution, since they provide not only the needed shade, but air circulation as well.

Mosquitoes, fleas, and ticks also love the hot, wet weather. Have your pet checked for heartworm, and take appropriate measures to keep them at bay. Be vigilant on checking for fleas and ticks. Both can cause serious health problems. It's always best to stay with vet-tested and recommended products.

The Coalition for Pet Protection, founded in 1992, offers financial help for medical needs for area felines. CPP also has an active animal food pantry for dogs and cats. The Coalition is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. All donations are used locally and are tax deductible.

Plans are being finalized for the first "Cheers for Charity Event" in August. Follow CPP on FaceBook, and at [www.petcoalition.org](http://www.petcoalition.org). The hotline number is (402) 434-7922.

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