

Summer Days Bring Health Hazards for Pets

CHICAGO, (July 21, 2015) – Summer brings time at the beach, cookouts, running and other outdoor activities for people. For pets, these fun, warm weather activities can mean exposure to serious – or even fatal – health hazards.

Each year, the emergency room at Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center (CVESC) (www.ChicagoPetEmergency.com) treats more than 11,000 dogs and cats in need of emergency care. A disproportionate number come to the facility during Chicago's summer months. Veterinarians at Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center treat pets suffering from problems such as heatstroke; falls from windows, balconies and decks; food borne illness; insect borne illness and more. Such cases can require extensive medical treatment, hospitalization or surgery. Sometimes, the pet cannot be saved. Frequently, the situation could have been avoided.

“Often, people don't realize how many dangers cats and dogs are exposed to during warm weather months,” said Dr. Jerry Klein, supervising veterinarian at Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center. “Events that can be fun for people, like cookouts or a day at the beach, can become catastrophic for pets. Pets can quickly become dehydrated, suffer from sunburn, or acquire diseases from fleas, ticks and mosquitoes. Human foods enjoyed at cookouts may cause stomach upset, or even be toxic to pets. The result can be harmful to pets and costly for their owners.”

Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center encourages pet owners to take precautions to protect their pets during the summer season.

Warm weather dangers

Beaches, Boats & Pools

Not all dogs are good swimmers, so when on a boat or near a pool, keep your dog in a flotation device designed for their species and fitted to them. At the beach, pool or on a boat, make certain your pet has a shaded spot and plenty of fresh, clean drinking water.

Bug Spray and Sun Screen

Do not use human products on pets. Only apply products to pets that are specifically labeled for use on them. Never use products intended for dogs on cats or other animals.

Canine Influenza Virus

Canine Influenza Virus is a highly-contagious illness that is easily spread from dog-to-dog and may even be spread to cats. An outbreak of the disease in Spring 2015 sickened more than 1,000 dogs in the Chicago area. Pet owners should be alert to any news of additional outbreaks of the disease. Dogs that exhibit any signs of the illness, including coughing, fever and lethargy, should be isolated from other animals.

Cars

Never leave your pet unattended in a car, even for short periods of time. Cars heat up quickly and pets can suffer from heatstroke – a serious problem that can damage the kidneys, liver, brain and other organs. Signs of heatstroke include excessive panting and drooling, mild weakness and elevated body temperature. Warm weather is especially problematic for older, chronically-ill, overweight, or pug-nosed animals.

Cookouts

Keep your pet on its regular diet. Eating hot dogs, bratwurst, etc. can do more than cause an upset stomach -- it can lead to pancreatitis, a serious illness for pets. And be sure to keep alcoholic beverages away from pets as alcohol is poisonous to them.

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Exercise

Dogs can suffer from injuries just like people do. Make certain your pet is properly acclimated before taking it out on a run. Be aware of hot asphalt which can burn your dog's paw pads. Overheating is also a concern. Your dog will continue to run with you,

even to the point of danger to its own health, because it wants to please you. Monitor your dog when you run to be sure it doesn't become overheated.

Gardens

Many plants, such as lily, azalea, oleander and others are poisonous to pets. Make certain your pets aren't eating plants in your garden or flowers you bring into the house. Herbicides and pesticides can also be toxic, so follow the directions closely and don't allow pets into a treated area until the directions say it is safe to do so.

Parasites

Fleas, ticks and mosquitoes all carry disease that can be harmful or even fatal to your pet. Pet owners should work with their primary care veterinarian to identify products that are best suited to protect your pet from these dangers. Be sure to use products only as directed.

Traveling

When travelling in a car, pets should be secured in a crate or with a specially designed seatbelt harness. Dogs should not be allowed to hang their head out of the window as they can get hit by rocks and debris that can cause injury to their head or eyes. All pets should be micro-chipped and wear collar tags so that it can quickly be reunited with its owner should it become lost.

Windows, balconies & decks

Each summer, Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center treats dozens of pets that have fallen or jumped from windows, balconies and decks. The injuries can be extensive, and sometimes the pet cannot be saved. Pets should be kept away from open windows and safely secured with a harness leash held by a responsible adult when on balconies and decks.

A full list of warm weather dangers can be found at www.ChicagoPetEmergency.com

About Chicago Veterinary Emergency and Specialty Center

Chicago's most comprehensive pet emergency center, the Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center today provides the most advanced emergency, critical and specialty care available to cats and dogs. Staffed by highly-trained specialists and equipped with the latest technology, Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center is always open – 24 hours each day, every day of the year. In addition to emergency

veterinarians and staff, Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center has board-certified veterinarians who specialize in cardiology, dentistry, dermatology, internal medicine, neurology, oncology, ophthalmology, radiology and surgery to treat pets with special medical or emergency needs. This state-of-the-art facility includes ultrasound and MRI equipment, specialized surgical suites, a blood bank, specialized oxygen cages, heart monitors and more. Chicago VESC has been providing care for Chicago-area pets when they need it most for more than 30 years.

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