



## Pet Owners Urged to Take Precautions in Hot Weather

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MADISON – Forecasters are predicting temperatures reaching well over 90 degrees in the next few days, so pet owners should take special care in ensuring their pet’s safety. The State Veterinarian’s office of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) offers these tips to keep pets safe through the hottest days.

“Pet owners must take extra precautions in the next few days because heat stroke has serious repercussions, and can lead to generalized organ dysfunction and death,” said Dr. Bob Ehlenfeldt, State Veterinarian.

First, be aware of the signs of heat sickness. Because pets are unable to dissipate heat through sweating, pets are more susceptible to heat stroke. Signs of heat stroke in pets include a body temperature between 104 and 110 degrees, excessive panting, tongue and gums that are sticky and a dark or bright red color, staggering, stupor or seizures. In extreme cases, heat stroke for pets may result in bloody diarrhea, coma or death.

Follow this important prevention advice to safeguard your pet this summer:

- Do not leave pets in a car for any reason — Leaving your pet in a parked car can be a deadly mistake. Even with the windows open, the temperature can rise to more than 120 degrees in less than 10 minutes. Leaving your pet unattended in a car will expose them to heat stroke, dehydration, brain damage, difficulty breathing and ultimately death.
- Provide water, water, and more water — Always provide a bowl of clean, and preferably cool, water for your pet, both inside and outside. Keeping your pet properly hydrated will improve their health and prevent illness.
- Keep sick, elderly and overweight pets inside — Elderly, overweight and sick pets should not spend a lot of time outside in the hot weather. Even young and healthy pets should be watched closely to make sure they don’t get heat stroke.
- Avoid strenuous exercise — Don’t take your pet for a walk during the hottest part of the day, which is between noon and 4 p.m. It is better for you and your pet to exercise either in the early morning or late evening when the heat is less intense. Also, avoid walking on asphalt or sand, as the hot surface temperature may burn their paws.
- Take care when leaving pets in a home without air conditioning — Indoor temperatures can reach uncomfortable levels when the outdoor heat rises. One way to keep your pet safe and comfortable is to put them in the basement where it tends to be cooler and use fans to circulate air.
- Provide opportunities for your pet to get wet — Fill up a child’s pool with water and give your pet an opportunity to splash around or let them run through the sprinkler. If that’s not possible, use a spray bottle to mist them with cool water and provide a fan to move the air around.

If you do see an animal in distress, take action by alerting a store manager if you see a dog trapped in a car in their store's parking lot. Likewise, it may be necessary to call the police in instances where there is no one around.

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