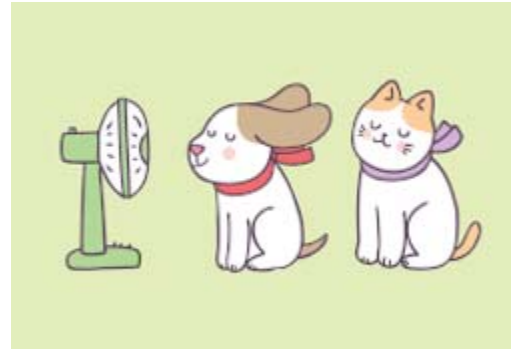


Summer Pet Safety Tips

The Cook County Department of Animal and Rabies Control urges pet owners to take special precautions to protect the health and welfare of their pets during hot and humid weather.

The department offers the following tips for pet owners to keep in mind:



Do not leave your pet in a hot car: Even with the windows rolled down, studies have shown that the temperature inside the car can increase 15 degrees above the outside temperature. The law requires that any time the ambient temperature is above 78 degrees, you cannot leave your dog in a car.

Keep your pets cool when outside: Pets can get dehydrated quickly when it's hot or humid outdoors. All dogs should be provided with cool water, shade and should be monitored when outside. Animals with short coats or with white or tan fur are more susceptible to sunburn, especially on their noses.

Consider a haircut: If your dog has a thick coat, consider a haircut for summer. One inch is a good length to keep your dog comfortable. Never shave your dog. The layers of a dog's coat protect them from overheating and sunburn.

Take care of your dog's paws: Remember that asphalt and sidewalks are hotter than grass and dogs' paw pads are highly sensitive to heat. Whenever possible, walk your dog on grass, dirt or gravel and avoid asphalt and concrete during a heat wave.

Keep inside temperatures cool: Make sure your indoor pets have water and are comfortable when in the home. Don't be alarmed if you see your cat sleeping somewhere odd, like the bathtub or the closet. Cats look for the coolest spot in the home.

Ensure window screens are secure: Before opening any windows in your home this summer, make sure there is a screen installed. Keep windows without screens closed and ensure adjustable screens are tightly secured. Cats are curious by nature and an open window without a screen could pose as a safety risk.

Signs of heat stroke: Know the warning signs of heat stroke especially if your pet has been exposed to hot weather for a substantial amount of time. Symptoms include fatigue, excessive panting, disorientation, lethargy, discomfort, seizures and collapse. If your pet is experiencing any of these symptoms, seek veterinary help immediately.