

With the hotter weather approaching, take a minute to consider what you can do to keep your dog or cat safe in the heat and humidity. Most of these things are simple common sense; your taking an extra second to ensure your pet's comfort and safety may save his (or her) life!

**VEHICLES:** This is not rocket science here; we all know how quickly the inside of a car heats up. Do not leave animals unattended in a car (even with the windows cracked) for more than just a few minutes. Consider leaving the car running with AC on if you will be gone for longer than this.

**ANIMALS WHO GO OUTSIDE:** Always make sure that your animal has unlimited clean, fresh water (put a bowl out for your kitty, too). They also need a shaded, cooler place to rest. Some people crack their garage doors for their cats in the summertime but remember that garages become furnaces too. Also, with the heat come more insects: make sure your animal is on heartworm, flea, and tick preventives (even cats). White cats can develop cancer of the face and ears with prolonged UV exposure. When the summer heat is at its worst, consider bringing your pets inside for relief.

**RECREATION:** When possible, bring water along for your pet (when walking, running, etc.). Do not restrict their intake as you might for yourself to avoid getting "water cramps." Allow them to rest frequently. If the pavement is too hot for you to comfortably place the back of your hand on it for five seconds, it is too hot for paw pads.

Signs of heat exhaustion include lethargy, vomiting, weakness, excessive panting, and in more serious cases twitching, disorientation, seizures, or collapse. Dogs and cats do not sweat except from the pads of the feet. They also dissipate heat by panting.

If you suspect your animal to be suffering from heat exhaustion, offer plenty of cool water and a cool resting place. If serious enough, bring to a vet immediately. If you do take your pet's temperature, remember that normal body temperature for a dog or cat is up to 103F. Do not immerse in ice or pour on freezing water. Too rapid cooling of any overheated animal is deadly as well so do not hesitate to seek veterinary attention.