

Summer and Pets: Keeping Them Safe in the Heat

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Dogs and other animals can also overheat in the house, especially if they are confined in front of a window and the sun shines through. Pay attention on this one if you are confining a



During times when you have no choice and must take your dog with you in the car during hot weather, be prepared. Take water and a bowl. Also be sure you have a leash and collar so you can take the dog with you if necessary when you leave the car.

puppy or caring for an elderly, sick or convalescing dog. Sadly, I had a client years ago that left a paralyzed dog resting comfortably in front of a closed sliding glass door. When the sun came out, the dog could not move away from the window, overheated and was dead by the time the owner returned home. Please do not let this happen to one of your animal friends and remember this is also true for birds, small caged animals and fish.

Avoid over exerting your animal in hot weather. Exercise is fine in moderation but

obesity, old age, underlying disease and previous bouts of heat stroke can predispose an animal to the condition. If you must work your dog or horse hard, do so in the early morning or late evening when the temperature is lowest. Also, some dogs do not know when to quit so you may need to be the wise one and stop the game for rest and cooling off time.

When taking your dog friends out in the sunshine and hot weather make sure they are not walking on hot pavement as they can burn the pads of their feet. Wearing boots can help avoid this situation. Also, sunburn can be an issue, especially in light colored or hairless breeds. Dogs can need sunscreen too.

Most of the time it is obvious when an animal is suffering from heat stroke, like when you find them in a hot vehicle. If it is not obvious, in dogs and cats, signs of overheating include, faster than usual panting, a bright red tongue, thick or sticky saliva and vomiting. With horses look for extremely heavy breathing and significant sweating

or no sweating at all.

I hope you never need this information but if you ever find a dog in an overheating situation, here are the important things to do. Be careful and remember to breathe throughout the process. Stay calm and speak softly as you handle the animal, especially if you do not know them. They may be in shock and could bite.

It is important to cool them down as soon as possible but doing so too rapidly can also cause more problems. Get them into a cooler, well-ventilated area if available. You can help them stand, sit or lay in a stream, lake or pool of water if it is not too cold. You can hose them down with cool water or use cold, wet towels and apply them to the head, neck, chest and foot pads. The biggest danger is the brain overheating so if resources are limited, put a cold, wet towel on their head first.

Call your veterinarian or emergency hospital to let them know you are on the way and get your dog friend there for treatment

as soon as possible. If you are dealing with a horse that is overheated, call the vet. Then while you are waiting for their arrival, sponge or spray the horse's legs and underside with cool water and offer cool water to drink. You can also stand the horse in a pond or stream to help speed up the cooling process.

Pet owners can be held criminally liable for committing cruelty to animals if a

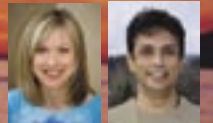
pet dies or is found suffering from heat prostration. If you see an animal that may be in need of assistance or if you have questions about this kind of situation, in our local area, you can call the Seattle Animal Shelter at (206) 386-7387 or King County Animal Care and Control at (206) 296-7387. For additional resources for horse owners, visit: www.kingcounty.gov/safety/AnimalServices/horses.aspx

Martha Norwalk is an animal behavior therapist and host of Martha Norwalk's Animal World, Sunday mornings, from 9 a.m. to noon on Alternative Talk AM 1150. She can be reached at Martha's Canine, Feline and All Creature Counseling at (206) 525-2016 or www.marthanorwalk.com. For a free, no obligation telephone evaluation or to make an appointment for Martha to work with you and your animal friend, give her a call.

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Martha Norwalk is an animal behavior therapist with over 35 years of professional experience and service. She also hosts her own radio show, Martha Norwalk's Animal World, Sunday mornings on Alternative Talk AM 1150. She is available for private sessions, either in your home or over the phone. With her holistic approach, Martha can help you understand your animal friends and solve any behavior, training or healing issues that they might be having. Martha's rates are surprisingly affordable and in most cases she will only need to see you once.

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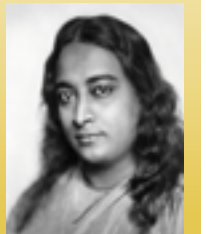
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