

10 Summer Safety Tips For Dogs

Summer presents a wealth of exciting opportunities for pet owners and their dogs to enjoy outdoor activities together. Here are 10 safety tips to ensure each day's activities are fun, safe, and problem-free:



1

Never leave your dog locked inside the car. Leaving a dog in the car on a hot summer day is the most common cause of death due to heatstroke in dogs. Even in the shade with the windows partly down, parked cars can quickly reach deadly temperatures, as it only takes a few moments for the body temperature to rise and put their life at risk.



2

Provide access to shade and water. When left outside on a hot day without access to shade and water, dogs can become dehydrated, which can also lead to heatstroke. Always make sure your dog can get out of the sun, and supply lots of fresh, cool drinking water. Remember to bring water with you on walks and outings as well.



3

Don't assume that your dog can swim. Dogs may instinctively start to dog paddle if they fall into the water, but that does not mean that all dogs know how to swim (or like the water)! If it's your dog's first summer near the water, take it slow. Don't force or throw your dog in.



4

Buy a lifejacket. Even if your dog can swim, make sure you have a lifejacket for your dog when you're boating, canoeing, or participating in any other activities that require people to wear lifejackets.



5

Be aware of hot asphalt and other hot surfaces. While dogs have evolved to have footpads that can withstand rough surfaces and heat (more than our own feet), prolonged contact with hot asphalt, concrete, or other surfaces can lead to burns. To avoid this, keep your dog inside and avoid walks during the hottest part of the day (usually between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m.). Opt to head out early in the morning or in the evening when the sun isn't directly overhead, and choose gravel or woodchip paths, or dirt roads, if you can, to protect your dog's paws, and keep to the shady areas.



6

Pack dog-safe picnic foods. Some foods that we find delicious can be poisonous for dogs. For example, chocolate ice cream, grapes and raisins, and foods sweetened with xylitol are toxic. Be aware of the foods that are dangerous for dogs and avoid bringing them along. Watermelon (rind removed) makes a great summertime treat for dogs!



7

Practice fire safety. Summer isn't summer without BBQs and campfires. Keep your dog safe on a leash and away from open flames. Do not let your dog reach for sticks from the fire or grab food off a BBQ or campfire grill. With a campfire, try to avoid burning wood like cedar, which contains highly flammable resinous tree sap. When the resin catches fire, it tends to explode and send out sparks (sometimes at a considerable distance) that could cause burns. Choose woods like maple, birch, or beech, which tend to spark less.



8

Make sure your dog is protected from fleas, ticks, and mosquitoes. Campsites, hiking trails, and other outdoor areas all offer exposure to insects such as fleas, ticks, and mosquitoes. Be sure your dog is up to date on his preventive medications. If you are heading to a mosquito-infested area, use an insect repellent especially made for dogs to keep your dog happy and comfortable. Any formulas containing DEET should never be used on dogs.



9

Keep your dog restrained. Whether heading out on a hike or camping trip, or to cottage - any new environment - keep your dog safely on a leash until you are confident he will not run away (to chase a squirrel, fox, or deer, for example). Getting lost can pose countless dangers, from exposure to the elements to tangles with predators.



10

Slather on the sunscreen. Dogs too can get sunburned, and skin cancer is one of the most common forms of cancer in dogs. Dogs that are white, light-colored, or hairless are especially at risk. Apply a specially formulated sunscreen made for dogs to the delicate, exposed areas (like the bridge of the nose or the belly) if your dog will be spending time outdoors or loves to sunbathe.