



Heat Safety Tips for Pet Owners

--AAHA Recommendations

STANDARD SAFETY TIPS

- Keep your pet hydrated
- Never leave your pet in a parked car
- Avoid walking your pet on hot pavement

TIPS THAT GO BEYOND BASICS

1. Implement ice cube toys

- One way to keep your pet cool and entertained is with ice cubes. But, you can go beyond simply dropping plain, boring cubes in their water bowl. Instead, make flavored ice cubes with low-sodium chicken broth or diluted fruit juice with no added sugars, or give them frozen treats specifically designed for pets. Let your pet crunch through the cubes to reach the treats inside, or bat and paw at the frozen block. They will be engaged and refreshed at the same time.

2. Design cooling pet mats

- While plenty of commercial cooling mats are available, you can make your own at home. Fill a resealable plastic bag with water, add a little rubbing alcohol to prevent the water from freezing solid, and then place the bag in the freezer. Wrap the frozen bag in a towel and place it in your pet's favorite resting spot. This will provide a cool, comfortable surface for your pet during the hottest days.

3. Elevate your pet's bed

- Consider an elevated pet bed that allows air to circulate beneath your pet and keeps them cooler than a traditional bed, which traps heat. Elevated beds are particularly useful for dogs, but smaller versions are available for cats. They also keep your pet off hot surfaces, like sun-baked patios or decks.

4. Fix frozen pet treats

- Stuff a durable rubber toy with your pet's favorite treat, peanut butter, yogurt, or tuna concoction, and freeze. This not only provides a refreshing snack, but also keeps your pet occupied for longer.

5. Apply pet-safe sunscreen

- Like people, pets can get sunburned, especially those with thin or light-colored fur. Apply a light layer of pet-safe sunscreen to your furry pal's nose, ears, and other exposed areas to protect them from harmful ultraviolet rays.

6. Create hydration stations

- Ensure your pet can easily find water anywhere in your home or yard. Consider swapping out some bowls for water fountains, which help keep the water circulating and cool. When you're outdoors, a collapsible water bowl and a chilled bottle of water can keep your pet hydrated on the go.

7. Wallow in wading pools

- Set up a small wading pool in the shade in your yard. Fill the pool with a few inches of water and let your four-legged friend splash around and "dive" for toys and treats. Keep the water clean and closely supervise your pet while in the water to ensure their safety.

8. Set up a shady pet oasis

- If your yard lacks natural shade, create a cool oasis for your pet with tarps, umbrellas, or pop-up tents. Ensure the area has good airflow and is easily accessible for your pet. For added coolness, place a fan nearby to help circulate the air. This shaded retreat will provide a much-needed respite from the sun.

9. Cool off with pet bandanas

- Consider cooling bandanas or vests, which are designed to be soaked in water and then worn by your pet. The evaporating water helps lower your pet's body temperature. These cooling cloths are particularly effective for dogs during walks or outdoor play sessions.

10. Adjust your pet's exercise routine

- Change your pet's exercise routine to early mornings or late evenings when the temperatures are cooler. For high-energy pets, indoor playtime or mentally stimulating games can provide a good workout without exposing them to the heat.
- Keeping your pet safe and cool during the summer requires some creativity and planning. These beyond-the-basic tips can help ensure your furry friend stays comfortable and healthy on the hottest days. Remember, always monitor your pet for heatstroke signs, such as excessive panting, drooling, or lethargy, and consult your licensed veterinarian.

If you need a veterinarian, visit **CVMA's FIND A VETERINARIAN** at <https://www.chicagovma.org/find-a-veterinarian/>