

Summer Pet Safety Tips

Written by Lauren Grifol

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To visit Snowflake's profile, and all of the other loveable and adoptable pets click [here](#). #AdoptDontShop.

Have a family member that's a little hairier than most and maybe has two too many legs? Just like *human* children, summer time is a favorite time of year for our pups. From poolside play-time to walks around the block, our pets need protection from the heat just like us. Here, in this interview, Dr. Matt Goetz, the medical director for MDPet Care at [Arizona Animal Welfare League](#), gave us the need-to-know tips and tricks on keeping your furry friends safe as we enter the triple-digit degrees.



AFM: What are some of the most common illnesses and injuries you see pets encounter over the summer months?

MG: The most common illness that we see during the summer in the Valley is heat stroke. Signs of heat stroke can include excessive panting, 'brick red' gums, fever, vomiting/diarrhea and collapse. Heat stroke can be deadly, so it is very important that you seek medical attention ASAP if you suspect your dog/cat has heat stroke. Along with heat stroke, pets are more prone to over-exertion caused by excessive exercise. Similar to people, pets can also get sunburned easily if out in the intense summer sun. Finally, hot surfaces such as pavement or concrete can cause burns to paw pads.

AFM: What are some ways pet owners can protect their pets from these illnesses and injuries?

MG: One of the best ways that pet owners can avoid heat stroke, sunburns or damaged paw pads to exercise their dogs in the morning or late evening when the sun is less intense. Besides exercising in the early morning or late evening, pet owners should check to see how hot the ground might be. They can do this by placing their hand on the pavement/concrete for 10 seconds. If the ground is too hot for you to keep your hand in place for 10 seconds, then it is too hot for your pet.

AFM: Any tips on specific products they should use?

MG: Most major pet retailers carry dog sunscreen, which is the safest type of sunscreen to use on your dog.

AFM: Any hazardous insects or plants unique to the Valley that Arizonans should watch out for?

MG: Rattlesnake bites are extremely life-threatening to pets. Most of the time, pets tend to get bitten on the legs or face. The bites tend to be extremely painful and rapid swelling will usually occur. It is very important that you seek medical attention ASAP if you suspect a rattlesnake bite. There is a vaccine available, but you should speak with your family veterinarian prior to deciding if it is best for your dog. Other venomous animals include Gila monsters, scorpions and the Colorado River toad (also called the Sonoran Desert toad).

AFM: Which animals are most susceptible to heat exhaustion?

MG: Brachycephalic (short face) breeds such as boxers, Boston terriers, pugs and Persian cats are the most susceptible to heat exhaustion and extra precautions should be taken during the hot summer months.

AFM: Water safety tips?

MG: Before letting your dog go swimming, make sure he/she knows how to swim. Always make sure that you are familiar with the area and that you can see your dog at all times. Finally, if your dog develops diarrhea and/or vomiting soon after swimming, you may need to see a

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veterinarian for possible giardia.