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Humane Society Silicon Valley Offers Hot Weather Tips for Pets *Leaving Dogs in Cars Can be Fatal*



SANTA CLARA, Calif., -- July 15, 2008 – With temperatures in the high 80s and 90s, it's important to make sure that your pet has protection from the heat and sun and plenty of fresh water.

Humane Society Silicon Valley Staff Veterinarian Dr. Julia Lewis says heat stroke can be fatal for pets as well as people. Dr. Lewis offers the following tips to help keep your pets safe during the hot summer months:

- **In the summer heat your pet can suffer from heat exhaustion and heat stroke.** These conditions are very serious and could cause your pet to die. You should be aware of the signs of heat stress, which could include heavy panting, excessive drooling, glazed eyes, a rapid pulse, unsteadiness, a staggering gait, vomiting and/or diarrhea, or a deep red or purple tongue/gums. If your pet does become overheated, you need to immediately lower his body temperature. Move your pet into the shade and apply cool (not cold) water over his body to gradually lower his core body temperature. Apply cold towels or ice packs to your pet's head, neck, and chest only. Let your pet drink small amounts of water or lick ice cubes. Most importantly, get him to a veterinarian immediately.
- **Never leave your pet alone in the car.** The inside of your car can reach 120° in a matter of minutes, even if you're parked in the shade with the windows slightly open. Dogs and cats can't perspire and can only dispel heat by panting and through the pads of their feet. Pets who are left in hot cars even briefly can suffer from heat exhaustion, heat stroke, brain damage, and can even die. Don't think that just because you'll be gone "just a minute" that your pet will be safe while you're gone; even an air-conditioned car with the motor off isn't healthy for your pet. To avoid any chance that your pet will succumb to the heat of a car this summer, be sure to play it safe by leaving your pet cool and refreshed at home while you're on the road.
- **Provide adequate ventilation in un-air conditioned homes.** Make sure the rooms are adequately ventilated by having a fan or fans on at all times to help circulate the air. You can also place ice cubes in the pet's water dish to provide cool water throughout the day, better yet, you can freeze a dish of water overnight then place the frozen water dish next to your pet's regular water dish. As the ice melts throughout the day, you pet will have access to the nice cold water. But, always have fresh liquid water available.

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- **Make sure your pet is always wearing a collar and identification tag.** Microchipping your pet is also a good idea in case your pet loses his ID tag. If you are separated from your pet, a microchip and ID tag may very well be his or her ticket home.
- **Pets and pools can equal disaster.** Plastic wading pools are ideal for dogs to cool off in, provided they are supervised. Prevent free access to pools and always supervise a pet in a pool to prevent accidental drowning.
- **Provide plenty of fresh, clean water and shade for your pets** while they're enjoying the great outdoors so they can stay cool.
- **Take care when exercising your pet.** Adjust intensity and duration of exercise in accordance with the temperature. On hot days, save longer walks and games of catch for the cooler mornings and evenings. Be especially careful with older dogs and short-nosed dogs like pugs and bulldogs. Their facial conformation makes it difficult for them to cool their bodies by panting. Keep in mind too that asphalt gets very hot and can burn your pet's paws.
- **Don't take your pets to crowded summer events such as concerts or fairs.** The loud noises and crowds, combined with the heat, can be stressful and dangerous for pets. For your pet's well being, leave her at home.
- **Pets can get sunburned too, and your pet may require sunscreen on his or her nose and ear tips.** Pets with light-colored noses or light-colored fur on their ears are particularly vulnerable to sunburn and skin cancer. Shaving pets with heavy coats isn't always a good idea and could make your pet vulnerable to sunburn and skin cancer. Check with your vet before grabbing the shaver.
- **Heat can kill a rabbit.** Ideally, bunnies should be kept inside an air-conditioned home on days that the temperature is over 78 degrees. If that's not an option, make sure the rabbit's cage is in a shady spot that is well ventilated. Keep a few plastic bottles of water in the freezer and place the bottle in the cage next to your bunny to help cool him off. For more information on hot weather tips for rabbits, visit The Rabbit Haven online at www.therabbithaven.org
- **Keep your cat indoors.** Though your feline friend may wish to explore the outdoors, cats that are permitted to go outside are at an increased risk of disease and injury from vehicles or other animals.
- **Keep parasites at bay.** Take care in choosing flea and tick control products, as some can be harmful to pets and children. Check with your veterinarian before buying any over the counter flea or tick medication. ADVANTAGE(tm) for kittens can be used on your rabbit on a monthly basis. Consult a rabbit vet for more information on this product. Dogs and cats are at an increased risk of contracting heartworm during the summer. Transmitted by a bite from an infected mosquito, heartworm disease can be fatal if not treated. Check with your veterinarian for the best schedule for heartworm testing and preventive medication for your pet.

About Humane Society Silicon Valley

Humane Society Silicon Valley (HSSV) is an independent, non-profit agency offering quality adoptions, medical care and education programs to enhance the human-animal bond. Established in 1929, HSSV has served Silicon Valley for 79 years and has adopted more than 500,000 animals into permanent, loving homes. HSSV is an "open door" shelter and accepts animals 24-hours a day, seven days a week. HSSV's medical center offers affordable spaying/neutering, vaccinations and microchips to the public. More information about HSSV can be found at www.hssv.org or call 408.727.3383.

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