

# HEAT STROKE...

is a critical concern in our hot, dry or humid Texas summers, but there are other dangers to consider. For important information regarding heat stroke, click the link to the article on heat stroke

## OTHER SUMMER DANGERS

Summer is a social time of year. Family and friends come to visit; we travel to visit family and friends. Picnics, cookouts, boating... lots of fun, but lots of danger, too. Visitors may have medications or foods in luggage or purses that your pets may investigate, then ingest. Should you visit another home with your pet; that home may not be "pet-proofed". Concerns include:

- Sugar free gum with **XYLITOL**.. an immediate life-threatening situation for dogs. Call your vet or ER facility immediately. DO NOT WAIT FOR SYMPTOMS TO DEVELOP.
- **Medications**, particularly for heart or blood pressure issues are dangerous. Pets can chew bottles open quickly!
- Watch out for **COCOA MULCH** in flower beds, and do not use that product (chocolate toxicity).
- Watch out for **ribbon or string with cats**. Many cats will swallow string or ribbon. If ribbon protrudes from your cat's mouth or anus and does not come free with the lightest pull.. **DO NOT PULL FURTHER!** GET YOUR PET TO THE VET IMMEDIATELY.. this may be life threatening situation.
- **Watch your pets around children**. Some children know how to handle pets, many do not. For the safety and well-being of all.. SUPERVISE.
- If you travel with your pet, **take along a copy of their records including vaccinations**, a supply of **their food** (double what you expect to use) and **bottled water**. Some pets are very sensitive to changes in diet. A stressed pet breaking with diarrhea and gastric upset is not a fun vacation companion.
- Have pets crated when traveling; with ID tags **on the pets** that include your cell phone and phone numbers of your destination. If your pet is micro-chipped, notify the monitoring company of changes in contact numbers. \*\*if you pet is chipped, MAKE SURE the chip number IS registered with a monitoring company.
- **Do not allow pets to drink ocean or lake water**. Salt will cause dehydration and lake water often has parasites that will make your pet ill.

**Boarding your pet or hiring a pet sitter may be the kindest and safest "vacation experience" for your pet.**

Our pets cannot communicate with us in words, so we must rely on their actions and attitudes to guide us. You know your own pet better than anyone else, so you may be the first to notice that something is wrong. Here are some signs to watch for that might indicate the need for veterinary attention. Please note that this is not a complete list. If your pet exhibits any signs that do not seem normal, call your vet right away.

*Immediately* contact your veterinarian or go to an emergency clinic if you observe any of the following signs:

- Blue, white or very pale gums
- Labored breathing
- Collapse or loss of consciousness
- Dizziness, imbalance, or circling
- Inability to walk
- Extremely bloated abdomen
- Seizures
- Signs of acute severe pain (such as crying out very loudly and excessively)
- Body temperature over 104 or under 99 (normal is typically 100.5-102.5)

Contact your veterinarian if you notice any of the following signs lasting more than 24 hours:

- Poor Appetite
- Lethargy
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Lameness
- Weakness
- Excessive salivation
- Frequent and/or inappropriate urination
- Constipation
- Excessive scratching or dull, dry, or flaky hair coat
- Wheezing or frequent panting
- Nasal discharge or congestion
- Displays of mild to moderate pain (such as crying when a specific area is touched or action is taken)

In general, you should contact your veterinarian if you notice any signs that you deem abnormal for your pet. It is better to be cautious than to wait. In some cases, your vet may be able to tell you if something does not need to be addressed right away. In other situations, your vet may advise you make an appointment or to go to an emergency clinic, depending on the urgency. Above all, follow your veterinarian's advice.

**Have a wonderful, fun-filled summer..**  
**and make it SAFE for your family, including your pet.**

This article is a portion of the Parkside Animal Hospital e-Newsletter April-May 2010.

Please see our Newsletter library to see the entire article.