

Summer Management of Your Furry Pets

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Abstract

As temperature is soaring, maintaining our pets hydrated, healthy and happy is not a cakewalk in this summer season. Protecting the pets from dehydration and heatstroke is the top priority to the pet parents. It is important to modify the routine with summer-friendly diet and other activities to keep them cool and sound and to have a happy summer season.

Introduction

Summer is a fun and exciting time for both pets and their owners to enjoy their time in outdoors. However, it is important to take extra precautions to ensure that your furry friends stay healthy and safe during the hot and humid weather. The most serious issue of pets during the warmer months of the year are dehydration and heatstroke.

Dehydration

Water is an important nutrient and our body organs rely on water for proper functioning. When pets are losing more water than they are taking in, dehydration occurs. It refers to shortage of fluid in the body which also affects the delivery of oxygen to the body tissues and organs. Dehydration is a serious concern, which could be fatal in severe cases. The symptoms of dehydration include dizziness, agitation, weakness, excessive drooling, xerostomia, sunken eyes, loss of skin elasticity. The simplest way to test for dehydration in animals is to pinch a little skin on pet's back or top of their head using your thumb and forefinger. If the animal is hydrated enough, it springs back to the original place immediately. If the animal is dehydrated, the folds of skin moves back very



slowly and in severe case it doesn't spring back at all. To prevent the animal from dehydration, ensure that the pet animal is having plenty of access to clean and fresh water and one must check the bowl after every few hours.

Heat stroke

It is commonly referred as hyperthermia or elevated body temperature. If the pet's body temperature exceeds 39.5°C, it is considered hyperthermic. High body temperature of the animal without any signs of previous illnesses is mostly due to high temperature of the external environment and are referred to as heat stroke. Dogs have relatively small number of sweat glands, so they are not able to cool themselves down as easily as humans by sweating. Their primary way of regulating their body temperature is by panting. When the pets are left in a yard with no access to shade or water in a hot day are more susceptible to heatstroke. The muzzled dogs are also at greater risk since their ability to pant is restricted by muzzle. Heatstroke is very common in brachycephalic breeds with restricted airway.

The symptoms of heatstroke include elevated breathing rates, dry or sticky gums, abnormal gum color, bruising in the gums, may appear lethargic or disoriented, agitation, dizziness and can have seizures. The heat stroke could be fatal as it results in multiple organ failure.

Here are some tips to help you manage your pets during the summer months.

1. Keep your pets hydrated

Pets tend to overheat and go dehydrated during the warmer days. Make sure your pets have access to clean and fresh water at all times. You can also give them ice cubes or frozen treats to help them cool down. If you are going out for a walk or a hike, bring a water bottle and a bowl for your pet.

2. Groom your animals

Brush your companions a few times a week to get rid of loose hairs so that they feel lighter and are more comfortable in high temperatures.

3. Avoid walking your pets during the hottest times of the day

The pavement and concrete can get very hot during the summer months and can burn your pet's paws. Try to walk your pets early in the morning or late in the evening when the temperature is cooler. You can also take your pets to a shaded park or If you are taking your pets on a walk or outing, bring a water bottle and a portable bowl to keep them hydrated.



4. Avoid leaving pets in hot cars

Leaving pets in hot cars can be extremely dangerous and even deadly. Even if you think it will only be a few minutes, the temperature inside a car can rise rapidly and cause heatstroke.

5. Avoid hot surfaces

Hot asphalt, concrete, and sand can burn your pet's paws. Try to walk your pet on grassy areas to protect their paws. You can also walk your pet during cooler parts of the day, such as early morning or late evening.

6. Feeding

Avoid feeding foods that are warm in nature. With rise in temperature, pets tend to lose appetite. Light, freshly prepared and easily-digestible meals are beneficial in summer to maintain their nutritional intake. Pet foods are advised to be stored in the cool place and avoid leaving them outside as it can be spoiled easily. Watery-fruits, buttermilk and yoghurt, green leafy veg are summer-friendly to the pets.

Conclusion

Labored breathing and abnormal head movements are indications of heatstroke. Pour water at room temperature on the animals' body to cool them down, wipe them with a wet towel, and call a veterinarian. Avoid sudden cooling like putting the animal in an ice bath.

Stay alert and save a life. Happy summer with your furry friends.

