



Warm weather and your pet

Spring is here! Spring is a great time to take your dog out for early walks, beach strolls and sunset play times. Cats will probably want to get out and about earlier and of course may push the limits when it's time to come in for the night.

Below are a few warm weather hazards to be mindful of & we'll add some more for the next edition.

Sunburn

Sunburn can affect dogs or cats with pink or white pigmented skin (ie paler colours such as white, apricot or beige coloured animals). The most common area for sunburn is the nose, but it can also affect the ear tips, and any hairless areas such as the stomach. If your pet has pink or white areas with little or no hair cover for protection then make sure you take precautions to prevent sunburn. White haired dogs and cats are at most risk and even ears covered with hair can be burnt without you noticing. Sun block for animals is available from your vet or some pet shops. This will need to be applied at least once a day or before your pet goes outdoors. Skin cancer can kill and disfigure so make sure you prevent your pet from getting burnt. If you have any doubts then ask your vet for their advice, they can let you know if your pet is at a high or low risk of skin cancer.

Snakes and your pet

Snakes don't usually bite without provocation, and should be left well alone. 90% of bites occur when someone is trying to catch or kill a snake. Of course an inquisitive dog or cat looks pretty threatening to a snake and so pets are at risk. Especially if it tries to catch or kill a snake. We live in a snake prone area but not all vet clinics stock anti-venom as it is very expensive. Even if snakes are not usually found in your area it is a good idea to find what clinics have anti venom in stock. Enter the name of the clinic in your phone and know the opening hours and address. If a snake bite should occur you may not have much time to get help.

So what to do if a snake bite is suspected? Firstly keep calm & don't try to kill the snake or pick it up for identification (you are no help to your pet if you get bitten). In most cases a description is all that is needed and the local vets or emergency service will usually be aware of the types of snakes found in the area. If you suspect a snake bite call the vet immediately. If you know where your pet has been bitten apply a pressure bandage to that area (Bandage firmly above and over the site, down the limb and then back up the limb). It's important the vet knows you are coming down so they can prepare for your arrival, they may also give you other first aid advice so speak with them first.



Drive safely to the vet without delay. Keep your pet calm and where possible keep them still (confinement is often the safest option). In some cases venom is not injected during the bite so the vet may just observe the animal before treatment.

Remember snakes are a protected species so should not be killed (and do not attempt to capture a snake). If you have a snake on your property call the wildlife helpline (In Perth it's called Wildcare and the number is 9474-9055) it's a good idea to have the number of your local wildlife helpline on your fridge and stored in your phone. There are a number of trained volunteers who will come out and safely relocate the snake for you.

If you are in a snake prone area there are 2 things to consider: One is pet insurance as a snake bite could be extremely expensive. The second thing is to think about extra training with your dog. Teach them to leave wildlife alone. Teach the 'leave it' command which can be applied to all manner of things including unknown objects or wildlife.

Hot feet

Hot feet when walking your dog: Yes dogs have got nice thick pads on their feet, but it's nothing like our rubber soled shoes! Remember when going out for walks during the day that the ground will get hot. It's easy for us to forget when we are wearing shoes. I've looked out my window before to see little dogs trotting down the street at a fast pace with their owner blissfully unaware that the trotting was due to the poor dog trying to get its feet off the ground!

If you have to walk your dog during the day then stick to grassed areas or drive them to the park. When you are walking on hard surfaces the pale coloured paths may feel slightly cooler than road surface but stick to the shade where possible.

Another danger is Hyperthermia (heatstroke) and we'll discuss that next edition.