

The summer season is a great time of year, and not just for people. Cats, dogs, and other pets love the warm weather just as much as their owners, and tagging along on road trips, swimming in the pool, and hanging out by the picnic basket are all popular summertime activities.

As a caring pet parent, you will want to keep your best friend safe this summer, and that starts with the proper planning. Understanding the dangers summertime can bring and being proactive about them is the best way to protect your pet all season long.

**1** Make sure all ID tags are accurate and up to date. Your pets do not know their address, and even if they did they would not be able to communicate that vital information. You can close the gap by making sure all ID tags are accurate, up to date, and easy to read.

**2** Ask your veterinarian about microchipping. Even the best ID tag will be useless if your pet's collar is lost, so ask the vet about microchipping for your cat or dog. This permanent form of ID cannot be lost, and it could be the key to reuniting with your pet.



**3** Avoid picnic foods that could be dangerous for your pet. When the weather gets warm dinner is often outdoors, and there is nothing like a summer picnic. If your pet wants to tag along and join in on the fun you can keep them safe by keeping them away from foods that could be harmful, like chocolate and small or cooked bones.

**4** Practice smart water safety. There is nothing like a swim at the lake or a dip in the pool when the weather gets hot, but pet parents should never allow their dogs to swim unsupervised. Practicing smart water safety and keeping a watchful eye on your pet are vital during this special time of year.



**5** Know the signs of heatstroke. Sometimes the heat can get a bit too intense, and when it does heatstroke can be a real danger for your pet. Educating yourself and knowing the warning signs is the best way to keep your pet safe when the mercury rises.

# SUMMER Keep Your Best





# FOR PETS Best Friend Safe



**6** Make sure your pet is up to date on all vaccinations. From established diseases like rabies and distemper to emerging threats like Lyme disease and the West Nile virus, your pets are facing dangers on many different fronts. The best way to fight back is with timely vaccination, so make sure your pets have all their necessary shots.



**7** Provide an outdoor playground for your indoor cat. Keeping your cat indoors is good for their safety and well-being, but sometimes kitties just want to play and enjoy the warm weather. A supervised romp in an outdoor playpen can be just the thing for your summer-loving cat.

**8** Make road trips safer with a canine seat belt. The only thing better than hitting the road for a summer road trip is taking your best friend along for the ride. A canine seat belt will help keep your best friend safe and secure no matter what the road has in store.

**9** Keep your pet safe with flea and tick protection. From collars that provide protection for the entire season to spot-on treatments applied directly to their fur, pets and their parents have many choices, so do what works best for you and your best friend.

**10** Do a daily tick check. Even if you have tick protection in place, it never hurts to be sure. Conducting a daily tick check of your pet, and yourself, is the best way to steer clear of some seriously scary diseases.

For many pet owners summer is the best time of year, and the only thing better than the warm weather is hanging out with their four-legged best friends. If you love summer and your pets, the 10 tips listed above can help you keep your best friend safe from warm weather dangers. ■