



APONC HEALTH NEWSLETTER

JULY 2024 ISSUE

In this Issue

The Health Committee's July issue focuses on "Fun in the Sun".

We have 4 topics pertaining to safety with your dog hot weather:

- *Beach tips and safety*
- *Seaweed – what to watch out for*
- *Tips on walking your dog in hot weather*
- *Heat related health issues in dogs*

We hope you enjoy reading these articles and learn some important techniques related to hot weather.

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Taking Your Dog to the Beach: Tips & Safety

A visit to the beach is an ideal way to spend a summer day, and it can be tempting to take your dog along. But be aware the beach isn't the best option for all dogs. However, for the right dog, the beach can provide new sights, sounds, and smells to experience as well as opportunities for exciting games. However, there are doggie dangers, too. Maximize your fun by trying these activities, training these behaviors, and watching for these hazards.

Beach Activities You Can Do With Your Dog

You can do many of your dog's favorite backyard activities at the beach. For example, you can play tug-of-war or provide your dog with their favorite puzzle toy. But don't miss out on all the opportunities for beach-related excitement. Here are some activities to try on your next beach outing:

- Go for a walk. Explore the shore and let your dog soak in the new experiences like sniffing seaweed, watching scuttling crabs, or chasing seagulls. But don't let your dog eat the seaweed or sand, both of which are dangerous for dogs to consume.
- Play fetch on the beach with a ball or flying disc. Just be sure to choose a quiet spot so your dog's enthusiasm for the game doesn't disturb other beachgoers.
- Play fetch in the water. Choose a brightly-colored floating toy so your dog can spot it on top of the waves. Be sure to play this game in relatively shallow water, as a bad throw can send your dog too far out from the shoreline.
- Frolic together in the water. Splashing through the waves is a fun game, but your dog can easily overtire. So, stay close to shore and don't leave your dog's side.
- Go swimming. If they are new to the water, teach your dog to swim. Let them go at their own pace and fit them with a life jacket

to provide extra confidence. Remember, even experienced dogs need constant supervision while they're in the water.

- Teach your dog to surf or boogie board. If your dog is a confident swimmer, see if they might enjoy balancing on a board and surfing the waves. Learning to balance is also great for dog sports, such as agility.
- Play in the sand. This is great for dogs who love to dig. Alternatively, you can build sandcastles and then let your dog destroy them.
- Go boating together. If the water is calm enough, get your dog's life jacket and try a canoe or kayak ride together

Whatever activities you decide to pursue, always supervise your dog. It's important for your dog's safety, but it's also part of responsible dog ownership. Don't let your dog disturb wildlife, damage vegetation, or become a nuisance to other people or dogs on the beach.

Training Your Dog Ahead of a Beach Outing

To ensure a safe and enjoyable beach day, there are certain behaviors your dog should know. First, your dog should have a reliable recall. Many beach activities require letting your dog off-leash, so you need to be certain your dog will come back to you when called. In fact, all your dog's basic obedience behaviors should be under your control with either a hand signal or verbal cue. If your dog isn't ready for that kind of freedom, stick to on-leash pursuits like walks along the shore.

"Leave it" is another important cue for your dog to understand. Leave it means your dog can't eat something which could be garbage on the beach, a dead fish at the water's edge, or food in somebody else's picnic basket. With enough practice, this cue can also tell your dog to ignore something like wildlife or other beachgoers.

Your dog should also be well-socialized and comfortable sharing toys with others. Beaches can get busy, and your dog might encounter loads of people and other dogs. For a social butterfly, that's all part of the fun. However, if your dog is uncomfortable around people or other dogs, choose quiet times to visit the beach, such as earlier on a weekday morning, rather than times of peak attendance.

What to Watch for When at the Beach With Your Dog

There are some obvious dangers at the beach like rough waves, but you might not be aware of other hazards like drinking salt water. There are also rules to follow like leash laws and scooping up your dog's waste. The following list will help you know what to watch for at the beach:

- Check the rules. Not all beaches and swimming areas allow dogs. And some locations only allow them on certain days or at certain times. It's also important to follow the leash regulations. Your dog might be allowed off-leash in some areas but not others.
- Watch for heatstroke. Provide your dog with shade and plenty of chances to rest. You might also have them wear protective gear, like a sun hat or cooling vest. Consider limiting your beach visits to early or late in the day when the sun isn't as strong.
- Apply sunscreen to your dog. Dogs can suffer from sunburn, so use pet-safe sunscreen on your dog's nose, ears, and any other areas with sparse fur.

- Provide lots of fresh water. Your dog can easily dehydrate in the heat of summer, so bring an insulated dog bowl and frequently offer cool water to drink.
- Try to limit the amount of salt water your dog may drink as it can make them sick.
- Prevent your dog from eating sand. It can block your dog's intestines, causing an impaction.
- Speak to a lifeguard about the water conditions. Situations such as rough waves or strong currents can make the water too dangerous for your dog.
- Be on the lookout for dangerous sea animals, like stingrays and jellyfish, that could be near the shore.
- Avoid hot sand. Especially midday, sand can get blisteringly hot and can burn your dog's paw pads. Consider boots.

Can Dogs Eat Seaweed?

Seaweed is an increasingly popular ingredient in recipes. A source of iodine, it contains antioxidants and is vitamin rich. Seaweed sheets also have a satisfying crunch and delicious natural flavor. But is seaweed good for dogs? Can dogs eat seaweed sheets while you snack?

In moderation, it is safe to share some types of seaweed with your dog. Dr. Jerry Klein, Chief Veterinary Officer for the AKC, explains “dogs can eat processed sheets of seaweed or nori, as long as it does not contain added salt or garlic.” If you want to share seaweed with your dog, make sure to read the ingredients list to make sure it doesn't have added seasonings. You can share these prepackaged seaweed sheets and other edible nori with your pet.

Is Seaweed Good for Dogs?

“Seaweed is nutritious and contains protein, iron, iodine, magnesium, and Omega-3s,” advises Dr. Klein. Iron is good for your dog's red blood cell health, The Omega-3s in seaweed can support canine brain development, aid immune system health, and even alleviate arthritis symptoms by reducing inflammation in your dog's body. Magnesium supports various immune and nerve systems.

Kelp is a term often used interchangeably with seaweed; however, these sea plants are indeed different species. Like seaweed, kelp is also safe for dogs to eat plain and in limited quantities. Because of seaweed and kelp's positive health effects, they will appear in many supplements. Dr. Klein advises that these supplements are safe, so long as they don't contain added garlic, onions, or similar seasonings. If you want to start introducing supplements into your dog's diet, be sure to consult with your veterinarian first.

How to Feed Your Dog Seaweed

Only feed your dog seaweed if it's plain, unseasoned, and in small amounts. Specifically, soy sauce has high salt content, which can be dangerous for your dog if eaten in concentrated amounts. You also shouldn't feed your dog sushi made with raw fish, which can make your dog sick. Like any snack, too much seaweed can upset your dog's stomach. Too much iodine, which is present in seaweed, can have an impact on your dog's thyroid.

Avoid Wild Seaweed

Keep an eye out for your dog while at the beach so they don't eat wild seaweed. This can contain excessive amounts of salt, which could put your dog at risk for salt toxicosis. In addition, Dr. Klein advises that the "long strands can become lodged in the intestines or even carry hidden animals or parasites."

Wild seaweed that is dry can also expand in your dog's stomach. Sometimes referred to as seaweed poisoning, this condition can cause vomiting, diarrhea, weakness, lethargy, and other symptoms of a bowel obstruction. If your dog does consume seaweed on the beach, consult a veterinarian right away.

How Hot Is Too Hot for a Dog's Paws?

Perfect dog weather means never having to say "it's too cold" or "it's too hot" to go outdoors for playing, walks, or anything in between. What temperature is that? It's different for every dog, but in general, a moderate 70 degrees Fahrenheit usually fits the bill for every dog. When the weather gets blazing hot, though, it's important to keep your dog protected from sunburn and UV rays. Knowing how to protect your dog in hot weather, and protect their paws from hot pavement, is critical.

When the thermometer registers 85 degrees Fahrenheit and stays elevated throughout the day, taking your dog everywhere you go, even for a short outing, can be dangerous. Spending even a few minutes to meander through an outdoor event can prove hazardous. That's because you're wearing shoes to protect your feet, but your dog isn't.

"Pavement, like asphalt or artificial grass, can become incredibly hot and cause discomfort, blisters, and burn a dog's paw pads," says Dr. Jerry Klein, DVM, Chief Veterinary Officer for the AKC and an expert in veterinary emergency and critical care.

Scorching surfaces are especially damaging to puppies with sensitive young paws. So how hot is too hot for a dog's sensitive paw pads? If the temperature is 85 degrees or over without the chance for the pavement to cool down, the ground may be too hot for safely walking a dog," says Dr. Klein.

According to data reported by the Journal of the American Medical Association, when the air temperature is 86 degrees, the asphalt temperature registers 135 degrees. "To find out if the ground is too hot for your dog to walk on, place your hand comfortably on the pavement for ten seconds. If it's too hot for your hand, it's too hot for your dog's paws," says Dr. Klein.

Your bare foot serves as another good measurement. Hand or foot, the same temperature test works on all types of terrain, including sand, metal, and concrete. And when it comes to a so-hot-you-can-fry-an-egg-on-the-sidewalk surface, don't discount dirt either.

Heat-Related Health Issues for Dogs

"In addition to damaged paws, hot pavement can also increase a dog's body temperature and contribute to the development of heatstroke," says Dr. Klein.

A dog's normal resting temperature ranges from 99 to 102.5 degrees Fahrenheit. Any temperature over 104 signals heat stress. Over 105 registers as heat exhaustion, and more than 106 is heatstroke requiring emergency veterinary care.

Heat Stress in Dogs

Watch your dog for signs and symptoms of heat stress. These include seeking shade, limiting movement, getting restless, choosing to sit or lie down, uncontrolled panting, nausea, vomiting, reddening skin, and excessive saliva. If you notice any of these, or a combination, treat the symptoms immediately.

Heat Stroke in Dogs

Heat stroke in dogs can be very serious, and may require immediate medical attention. If you see that your dog is acting confused, excessively drooling with thickening saliva, their gums are bright red, blue or purple, they are dizzy, have rectal bleeding, refuse to drink water, have lethargy, lose consciousness or have a seizure, immediate veterinary attention is required.

How to Cool Down a Dog

If any of these symptoms arise, you should immediately seek to help your dog cool down. Find a shady spot, apply ice packs under their front legs on their chest, pour cool water over their head and body, give them water to drink, and give your dog a cooling mat to stand or lie on. If you can, find air conditioning indoors, or in a cooled-off car.

Small and short-legged dogs are particularly susceptible to overheating, as their bodies absorb heat closer to the hot ground. Flat-faced breeds heat up faster, too.

Protecting Dog Paws in Hot Weather

“Dog's pads need to become acclimated to weather and stress,” says Dr. Klein. “The first long walk or jog of a warm season can often cause blisters on feet.” To help condition your dog's paws, walk on the pavement during cool weather. The hard surface helps toughen them and builds resistance for when the temperature heats up.

Many canine products help moisturize dog's pads to prevent cracking from heat. When pads are dry, they're more susceptible to burns from hot pavement. Dog shoes or all-terrain boots offer protection from hot surfaces, but many dogs need time to adjust to wearing them before the first outing.

Getting the right size—fitting snugly, but not too tight and not too loose—helps your dog acclimate to wearing shoes. Your dog's feet need some room to breathe. Choose foot coverings with wrap-around closures and full-foot grips on the bottoms. Avoid products that stick to the dog's pads.

If you must take your dog out during hot weather, avoid the hottest time of day. Walk in the early morning or evening. Choose grassy or shady areas.

For exercise during hot weather, set up a hard, plastic outdoor wading pool made for dogs. Plastic children's pools tempt dogs to dig and tear. If your dog swims in an adult pool, add a canine life vest for safety.