



Summer is a time for vacations, barbecues, parties, swimming, and outdoor fun. However, it's important to remember several safety measures when bringing your pets along for summer activities. Whether swimming at the beach or keeping your pets cool in hot temperatures, here are some tips to keep your pets safe during the summer and avoid a trip to the emergency room.

Beach and Pool Safety



Nothing is better than lounging around a pool or swimming in a lake during the summer. Where else would you want to be when the temperatures start to soar? You and your pet can both cool off by swimming. If you own a Labrador Retriever or another water dog breed, you'll have a swimming buddy by default! However, when your dog is around water or swimming, there are some precautions you should take.

Make sure your dog knows how to swim

Dogs are not all born to swim (some don't even want to try). If you know you'll be around water and want to ensure your pup is safe, and it's a good idea to gradually introduce them to swimming before you hit the lake. Introducing your pet to water when they are younger is also better.

- Start by getting into the water with your pup and introducing them to shallow water. If your dog sees you in the water with him, it will help him become more confident.
- As your dog paddles with his front legs, gently lift his back legs to demonstrate how to float.

- The most important thing is not to force it. Ensure your dog gets out of the water if he is nervous or scared. Keeping your dog relaxed during water time is essential.
- Also important is to learn CPR for dogs in case of an emergency.

Always keep an eye out for your pet

Always know where your pet is when you're near a body of water, whether it's the backyard pool or the ocean. Many dogs do not enjoy swimming, and some breeds must be especially cautious when swimming (e.g., Bulldogs, Pugs, Shih-Tzus). These brachycephalic breeds have flat faces, short snouts, and large chests, making them tire out quickly when swimming.

If you're swimming in a pool with your dog, make sure he swims laps and doesn't just lap up the water. A dog consuming excessive chlorinated pool water can experience nausea, vomiting, and esophageal erosion.

Stop your dog if you notice him trying to drink from the ocean. Drinking a lot of salt water affects a dog's blood sodium and can result in seizures. If you catch your dog drinking seawater, watch for any physical changes. It might be worth checking their sodium level if your dog gets lethargic and almost dull. Providing fresh water helps your dog avoid drinking from the ocean, so if they do lap up salt water, the freshwater will help fix their sodium levels.

Your dog can get sick from the water's salt, bacteria, and parasites. If your dog is swimming or playing in the ocean, a few mouthfuls of salt water may only cause diarrhea. But stop your dog from drinking if you see them gulping down seawater.


Rinsing your dog's paws with fresh water after leaving the beach can prevent skin and paw irritation.



It is also essential to monitor puppies carefully. Although swimming may be exciting, puppies are still babies and will tire quickly.


Be aware of water conditions

Protect Your Pets from Harmful Algae Blooms



Blue-green algae can form harmful blooms in lakes, ponds, and rivers that make the water murky, and can sometimes make the water look like pea soup or paint. These blooms may produce toxins and could make pets and people sick.

- If you see water like this, do not allow your pet to swim in or drink the water.
- Rinse pets off immediately if they come into contact with an algae bloom.



Call your vet immediately if your pet has been around an algae bloom and shows symptoms such as vomiting, staggering, drooling, or convulsions.

You should keep your pup away from blue-green algae because the water can make him sick. Cyanobacteria — or blue-green algae — can cause liver failure in your pet. Symptoms come on very fast and are usually vomiting and lethargy.

Additional symptoms include:

- Seizures
- Panting
- Excessive drooling
- Respiratory failure
- Diarrhea
- Disorientation

Finding algae blooms on beaches and lakes is becoming more common, so it is crucial to do a little research before heading out. Don't just assume a pond is a place where your dog can drink. Check online for news reports and your town's beach or lake water quality updates.

Often, toxic algae blooms appear as pea-

green paint or slime on the water's surface. The good thing is that an algae bloom has the advantage of being visible, so you really can't miss it.

The algae film often concentrates along shorelines where animals may drink or swim. Take precautions before allowing your pet to jump into a body of water. And be sure to rinse your pet with clean water after he goes for a swim; the algae can stick to his fur and later be ingested if he licks himself.

Use a life jacket

In addition to keeping your dog afloat, dog life jackets make it easier for you to spot them in the water. If you are taking your pet out on a boat, you may consider purchasing one.

Life jackets are necessary for taking your dog on a boat or kayak. Placing your dog in a life jacket if you paddle board is essential, too — if they fall off the board, you'll tip trying to get them on the paddle board with you. So you want to make sure that they have a life jacket.



There aren't safety classifications or recommendations for dog life jackets, but make sure you test the coat before using it. Put it on your dog, and ensure it's a good fit and comfortable.

If you have access to a pool, test the life jacket to see if it's buoyant enough. It may look like a good life jacket, but it might not have enough buoyancy to keep your dog afloat. Or if the buoyancy is in the wrong place, they could flip them over and make them more likely to drown.

Stick to reputable brands of life jackets from companies like Ruffwear. This isn't the time to buy fashionable outerwear — just because it looks cute or trendy doesn't mean it'll help your dog.

Watch what your dog eats

When dead fish and crabs wash up on shore, dogs may be interested in snacking on them. While they may look tasty for your dog, the creatures may contain deadly toxins that can make them sick.

Sand is another thing that some dogs end up eating at the beach. It is often accidentally ingested when digging in the sand or repeatedly picking up beach toys. Sand impaction can occur if a dog swallows enough sand and requires immediate veterinary assistance. Sand shrink wraps in the colon, and treatment for ingesting sand includes administering mineral water or oil enemas to help push the sand through. Vomiting, dehydration, and abdominal pain are signs of this severe condition.

Fireworks Safety

Editor's Note: These tips can also double for dealing with thunderstorms.



What would summer be without fireworks on July 4th? While the loud booms, crackles, and flashing lights delight us, your pet thinks otherwise! Some pets are not fazed by fireworks, while others panic as soon as they hear them.

Fireworks can be downright scary for your pet. Animals have a keen sense of hearing — four times more sensitive than ours — so what we hear at 20 feet, a dog can hear at 80 feet.

Also, pets don't understand the random sounds and lights caused by fireworks, so they perceive them as a threat. It's difficult to deal with noise phobias like fireworks and get your dog to stop being afraid of them because you can't create the stimulus to train them.

You can do a few things if your pet suffers from a fear of or aversion to loud noises.

Maintain a calm demeanor. Chances are, if you're cool as a cucumber, your dog will mimic you and calm down. A dog is intuitive and can sense fear or discomfort in humans, especially in their owners. If you're frightened or stressed out, your dog will see your reaction to the loud fireworks and assume that he should also react that way.

Additionally, don't change the way you speak to your pet. Sometimes, when we see our dogs afraid or stressed, the first thing we want to do is talk sympathetically to calm their nerves. Instead, maintain a matter-of-fact tone, as if nothing unusual is happening. Also, avoid saying "It's okay" and reassuring your pet that things are fine. Your positive manner will come across as praise (and you don't want to praise them for being scared).

Create a safe area for your pet. Put your dog's bed and favorite toys in a small room in your house and close any windows that may be open to muffle the noise. It also helps to block any outside light with shades or curtains. If your dog is crate-trained or enjoys

sleeping in his crate, encourage your dog to go to his crate (he may just head there on his own). Turning up the volume on the TV and playing music are great distracting tools.

Sometimes, compression

clothing helps. If you want to avoid medication, try using a compression shirt or vest.

ThunderShirts are popular and available online. The pressure from the shirt helps release pheromones or hormones that are calming to your dog. Alternatively, you can swaddle your pet in a scarf or fabric bandage.

A tired dog is a calm dog. If you know when the fireworks display is starting (or when there's a storm approaching), it may help to take your dog out for a run or exercise to tire him out. Exercise reduces anxiety and stress, so he may be able to handle his fears more effectively when the first fireworks bang is heard.

Proper identification is a must. It is not uncommon for pets to run in a panic when they hear fireworks (or thunder). They instinctively want to hide when they feel unsafe, so proper identification is crucial in such a situation. Your dog's collar should include ID tags with your name, your dog's name, and your phone number (some tags also have room for a location and/or address).

You can also buy a GPS tracking device for your dog. There are various trackers on the market (and they can be on the expensive side). Still, whenever your pup runs away, you can easily track him using your mobile phone.

Having your pet microchipped is a good idea, but it won't help if he runs away. Microchipping your pet is often misunderstood. **Microchipping is not a tracking device.** Getting your pet microchipped will only be useful if someone finds your lost pet



Image courtesy of the Humane Society of Navarro County

and brings him to a veterinarian so they can scan the chip to find you, the owner. A microchip is useless if the dog is never seen by a human and brought to a veterinarian.

Feline friends get frightened, too! Cats can and do have noise phobias, though they are less common. Cats tend to hide when they are frightened. If you're at home and watching the fireworks, ensure you find your cat before the fireworks begin. If the cat is in a room with a door, close the door.

Watching fireworks in the summer can be enjoyable for humans but may be less pleasant for your pets.

Summer Heat Safety

Spending time outdoors with your pet is great, but the rising temperatures can sometimes limit your outside enjoyment. Heatstroke can be a risk for your four-legged friends in the summer.

It's safe to say that if you feel the heat, your pet will feel it even more. But summer can be safer for your pet if you know the risks of high temperatures and how to help him.

Know the warning signs of heatstroke

**5 signs of
heat stroke
in dogs**



1. Excessive & ongoing panting
2. Brick-red or blue-purple gums
3. Lethargic, collapsed, seizures
4. Excessive drooling
5. History of exercise on a hot day, being left unattended in a hot car, or unable to get out of the sun

If you suspect your dog is suffering from heat stroke then you need to contact your vet immediately!

www.drbelindathevet.com

**5 signs of
heat stroke
in cats**



1. Open-mouth breathing or panting
2. Brick-red or blue-purple gums
3. Lethargic, collapsed, seizures
4. Excessive drooling
5. History of being left unattended in a hot car, or unable to get out of the sun (e.g. tick paralysis)

If you suspect your cat is suffering from heat stroke then you need to contact your vet immediately!

www.drbelindathevet.com

When the temperature rises, dogs and cats have difficulty dissipating heat because they have furry bodies. When they can't cool themselves, their core temperatures rise rapidly, resulting in heatstroke. Knowing the signs of heatstroke can help prevent your pets from suffering from it.

If you find that your pet is suffering from heatstroke:

- Immediately take your pet to a shady, cool area. Angle a fan directly on them if you have one. Rectal thermometers can help track their temperature.
- Offer cool water to your pet, but don't force them to drink if they don't want to.
- Put a cool (not ice-cold) wet towel under your pet's armpits and around its groin. Apply water to the tips of its ears.
- You should take your pet to an emergency veterinarian facility as soon as possible. This isn't a "just in case" situation. Your pet needs to be treated by a vet, even if you can get them out of the heat and cool them down with wet towels. Your pet's life could be at stake.

Keep your pet cool

Dogs and cats regulate their body temperature by panting and sweating through their paws. Cats lick their fur to keep themselves cool, covering themselves with saliva.

Some breeds of animals have a more challenging time adjusting to extreme heat than others. Persian cats and Pugs, which have flat faces, are more susceptible to heatstroke because they can't pant as effectively as other breeds. It is best to keep these breeds in air-conditioned rooms as much as possible, especially if they are elderly, overweight, or have heart or lung conditions.

Always have fresh, clean water on hand. A hot or humid day can quickly result in dehydration, and pets can suffer urinary, kidney, and gastrointestinal issues if their hydration is not maintained correctly.

A pet who is dehydrated may have the following symptoms:

- Lethargy
- Excessive panting

- Dry gums or mouth
- Sunken eyes
- Decreased appetite
- Decreased urination

If your pet's gums are glossy and wet, they are well hydrated. If they seem sticky and dull, there's a good chance your pet is dehydrated.

Delay spending time outside. Check the weather forecast and temperature before taking your dog for a walk. If it's scorching, postpone walks and hikes. The best time to walk your pet in the summer is early in the morning or later in the day when it cools down.

If you must take your pets outside, ensure there is a shady area for them to get out of the sun and take care not to overexert them. Heatstroke can occur when outside temperatures rise above 80°F (27°C) and humidity increases above 90 percent.



Along with hot temperatures, pet owners should also consider the temperature of the ground, particularly pavement. Have you ever noticed how hot it feels as you get closer to the ground? That's because it is! And because your pet walks close to the ground, its body heats up quickly, and its paw pads can burn. Angell veterinarians often see dogs at the Emergency/Critical Care service with paw pads that are burned or peeled off from walking on hot asphalt. Dogs have thick pads, so they don't feel it as much and won't know immediately. So, it's possible to get significant burns before they feel it.

Press the back of your hand against the pavement's surface for about seven seconds — this is an excellent way to test the heat. If the surface feels hot to your hand, it's too hot for your pet to walk on it.

Give your dog a haircut. It is common for dogs to shed their coats at the beginning of summer in preparation for warmer temperatures. However, daily grooming keeps them cool by removing any excess hair (this also helps cats).

You may want to have your long-haired dog groomed regularly (plus, it prevents ticks from infesting your dog). Even though grooming your dog is essential, *do not shave*

them. Their fur is insulating, helping them cool down and regulate temperature, so if you have a dog with a double coat like a Husky, it's okay to use a Furminator to get that undercoat out. But definitely don't shave them.

Invest in some pet sunscreen. Your pet's fur naturally protects it from burning. Still, it's a good idea to buy sunscreen (meant for dogs or cats, not humans) and apply it to areas most exposed to sunlight: the bridge of the nose, tips of the ears, around the groin, and inside the thighs—in general, any place where your dog or cat may have light pigmentation.

Tick Safety

If you've spent the day outdoors or in the woods, take some time to check your pet for ticks before you head home. The more time your pet spends outside, the more likely they will pick these creepy crawlies.

A Head-To-Tail Look at Keeping Your Furry Friend Safe from Ticks

Ah, spring is here! Once the weather starts to warm up and the snow melts, taking your dog for a walk outdoors is one of the best ways to bond and exercise together.

But one thing also returns once winter's cold subsides: **the tick.**

During the winter, when the temperatures drop below a certain point, ticks usually go dormant. Once temperatures reach 45 degrees and higher for a few days, ticks will resume their activity and seek hosts.

Ticks do have some benefits. Animals (such as reptiles and birds) eat them, and they provide information on the state of our ecosystems. Small mammals like rodents, squirrels, and rabbits are also likely to be plentiful where ticks are abundant. Having a low tick population can also indicate that predators of smaller animals are out of control.

Ticks are the bane of outdoor recreation, though, particularly for pets. Knowing where ticks hide, how to tell them apart, and how to prevent them from using your pet as a host can make springtime romps with your dog less stressful.

Is that a tick? How to know for sure

A dark speck of *something* appears in your dog's fur. You immediately scream, "TICK!" But upon closer inspection, you find it's just dirt. So, how can you tell for sure you see a tick?

Ticks are small, so make sure you scrutinize your dog. The ticks in the larval stage are tiny as a speck of sand. Once the larvae molt and become nymphs, they grow to the size of a poppy seed. An adult tick is the size of an apple seed. And if they've been feeding on a host? They can grow to the size of a small grape. (You really can't miss them at this point.)

Below are other ways that help determine whether what you see is a tick:

- There are no wings on ticks
- Ticks are usually flat and oval in appearance (unless they've been feeding)
- A tick larva has six legs; a tick nymph or adult has eight legs
- Their colors can range from grayish-white, brown, and black to reddish-brown and yellowish
- A tick can bite in all three of its active life stages: larva, nymph, and adult

What types of ticks affect dogs

If there were only one tick species, pet owners would be relieved. The good news is that only a few of the 700 hard ticks and 200 soft ticks found worldwide bite and transmit disease to pets.

American Dog Tick

 Tick Encounter

American Dog Tick (*Dermacentor variabilis*)



Larva



Nymph



Adult Male

Adult Female

Locations: East of the U.S. Rocky Mountains and in some areas of the Pacific Coast

Favorite Places: They love open spaces, such as tall grassy fields and low-lying brush and twigs

Appearance: They have dark brown bodies. Females have an off-white shield; males are more mottled in color.

Feeding Times: Adult females do the biting, and their feeding times are during the spring and summer months

Diseases: Canine Ehrlichiosis and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever

Brown Dog Tick

Locations: Throughout the eastern U.S., as well as areas of the West Coast, they love warm weather, so there are high concentrations of them in the southern regions of the U.S., particularly in Florida

Favorite Places: Anywhere dogs hang out, including kennels, dog beds, and in their humans' homes. (Fun fact: these critters can spend their entire life indoors.)



Appearance: They are reddish-brown with a narrow shape in comparison to other ticks

Feeding Times: Spring, summer, and fall

Diseases: Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Canine Babesiosis, and Canine Ehrlichiosis

Lone Star Tick

Locations: Throughout the Eastern U.S. but most prevalent in the South

Favorite Places: Wooded areas with dense undergrowth and around animal resting areas



Lone Star Tick (*Amblyomma americanum*)



Appearance: Reddish-brown; the adult female has a white dot – or “lone star” – on her back

Feeding Times: Notoriously aggressive biters, especially during early spring through late fall

Disease: Canine Ehrlichiosis

Rocky Mountain Wood Ticks

Locations: Rocky Mountain States of Nebraska, South Dakota, Arizona, New Mexico, and California

Favorite Places: They love shrublands, lightly wooded areas, open grasslands, and trails, mainly at lower elevations



Rocky Mountain Wood Tick (*Dermacentor andersoni*)



Appearance: They look like the American Dog tick but have a bright, reddish, teardrop-shaped body (Dog ticks are more dark brown). Females have a white-colored shield, and males will have gray and white spots on their bodies.

Feeding Times: Active between January and November

Diseases: Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Colorado Tick Fever

Blacklegged (and Brown) “Deer” Ticks

Locations: Northeastern, Mid-Atlantic, Southeastern, and the North-Central United States, but they can extend into Mexico

Favorite Places: A variety of habitats that are suitable for birds, large and small mammals such as mice, deer, squirrels, coyotes, and livestock



Appearance: They have reddish-orange bodies, black shields, and dark black legs

Feeding Times: They search for a host any time when temperatures are above freezing, including during winter

Disease: Transmits *Borrelia burgdorferi* (the agent of Lyme disease); also Canine Anaplasmosis

(referred to as Dog Tick Fever or Dog Fever)

Deer ticks are, by far, the biggest concern for humans and their dogs – not only because of the diseases they may carry but also because of their small size. It's easy for them to go unnoticed and attach and transmit diseases.

What time of the year are ticks active?

Most of the United States experiences an increase in tick activity during the spring. Some species remain active all year (including the winter), but most go dormant. However, during those first few days of warm weather, ticks prepare to feed. Because ticks are cold-blooded, their internal temperature varies according to the temperature of the air. It doesn't take much for ticks to become active in slightly warm microclimates. For this reason, vets recommend year-round awareness and prevention. Unfortunately, there isn't a start – or end – to tick season.

People also spend more time outside in early spring, doing outdoor activities like hiking and gardening, putting them at even higher risk of encountering a tick. To avoid tick bites, prevention should begin early in the spring.

The tick population decreases as summer ends, and the weather cools in the fall. Once the temperature drops below freezing, tick season ends in many parts of the country. While some tick species die in freezing temperatures, others go dormant until they can

find food (blood). Ticks that have adapted to colder weather, such as deer ticks, can remain active during the winter.

Some parts of the United States have moderate temperatures, where tick season lasts all year. As long as temperatures don't drop below zero, ticks can still find food in these regions.

Where do ticks like to hide?



Most ticks live in shady, moist areas near the ground, including under logs, fallen branches, tall brush, and grassy areas. They love to cling to tall grass or low shrubs and then jump off to hunt their next prey. Ticks can also be found around your home on your lawn, garden, and nearby woods and forests.

Ticks are more prevalent in wooded and grassy areas, where they feed on woodland creatures, ranging from deer and rabbits to birds and rodents. However, they can also be found in urban areas and on beaches along the coastline.

Here are a few tick habitats where you should keep an eye out for ticks:

- Wood piles (often homes to mice)
- Tall grassy areas
- In the woods
- Piles of leaves and litter/trash
- Branches on the ground
- Overgrown shrubs
- Bird feeders (they encourage other tick-attracting wildlife)

How to spot a tick on your dog

Since ticks are expert hidiers, they may be challenging to find if they have hitched a ride on your dog. Keep an eye on the following areas:

Under the collar

A tick might be able to set up their house under a dog collar since collars are seldom removed. Remove your dog's collar often and give him a spot check for creepy crawlies.

Private areas

Ticks like to hang out near a dog's genitals and perianal areas since they are warm.

Inside of ears

Your dog might scratch at its ears because of ticks, and for a good reason: a tick's favorite spot is inside the ear (lots of tiny places to hide).

Near the eyelids

Is it a stain or a tick? Ticks around the eyes are often challenging to detect, which explains why they go unnoticed often.

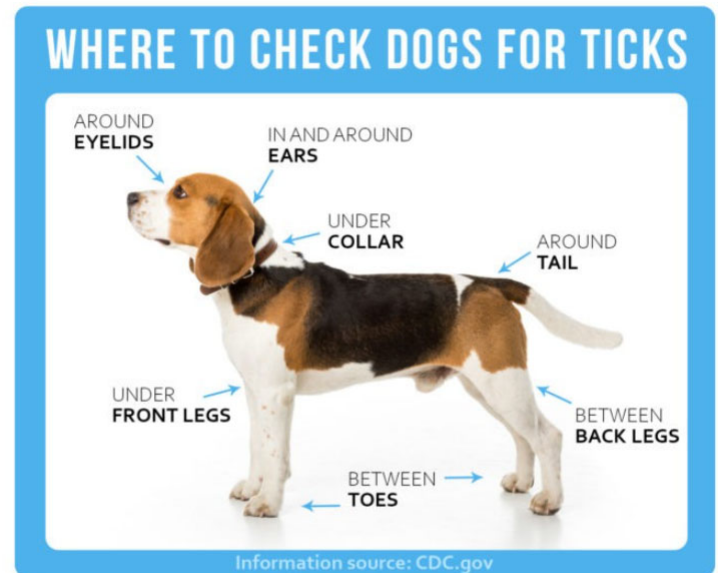
Between the toes and around the paw pads

Interestingly, this area goes unchecked sometimes, which makes little sense since dog feet pick up everything outside when they run around. The soft, warm skin around the pads can sometimes attract ticks, so check between each toe and in and around your dog's paw.

Mouth and lips

There is a chance that if you have a dog who enjoys munching on grass for his daily "salad," he may end up with more than just grass. Grass can host ticks that attach to the tongue or muzzle of dogs and enter the mouth when they lick their lips. It can be challenging to find ticks attached to the dog's gums, especially between the teeth.

In most cases, as soon as you find a tick, it will already be attached to your pet and feeding. Still, sometimes you'll find an unfed tick wandering across the top of your dog's fur, looking for food.



How to remove a tick from your dog

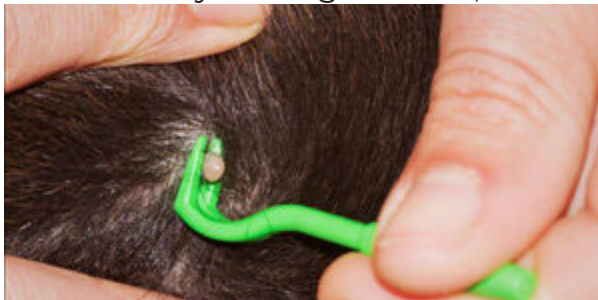


Finding a tick on your dog is often more difficult than removing one. If you know the proper method, you can safely dispose of ticks.

Removal and disposal

Once you find a tick, you need to remove it as soon as possible. Otherwise, you may leave the tick's head in the skin, which can cause later infections. It is essential to wear rubber gloves to prevent injury or infection whenever you remove a tick.

1. Tweezers with fine tips are very effective for removing ticks from the skin.
2. Pull the tick's body slowly away from the dog's skin. It would be best not to crush the tick because it can spread disease.
3. If you're using a tick removal tool, place the "forked" part under the bug, close to the dog's skin. Don't pull it straight out – this can break the tick and leave a piece of it behind in your dog. Instead, turn the tool clockwise several times.



4. After you remove the tick, clean your dog's skin with soap and warm water (you can also dab it with alcohol).

5. Drop the tick into a glass jar, plastic bag, or something else that's sealable. Add rubbing alcohol to the jar. The alcohol will kill the tick. Allow it to remain for a few weeks. If your dog seems ill, take the tick to your vet. They will examine it to see what kind it is, which can let them know whether it caused your pet to become ill.
6. Wash your hands with soap and warm water.

In the coming weeks, check the tick bite area often on your dog. If it looks infected or irritated, contact your veterinarian. Be aware if you see your dog excessively tired, have trouble walking, or do not eat or drink what they usually do. If this happens, schedule an appointment with a vet and take the tick with you

How do you prevent your dog from getting ticks?

Prevention is the golden rule for keeping your dog free from tick-borne diseases.

Stay away from tall grassy areas

Grassy areas are a tick's favorite hangout. It would be best to avoid or limit field exposure while walking your dog during the tick season (generally the warmer months between March and September). Staying away from tall grassy areas (like fields) is particularly important if deer graze in the area. It's better to walk in the center of trails or paths, away from plants and bushes along the edges, where ticks like to keep on the lookout for their next meal.

Make it a habit to check your dog regularly

After your walk, it's good to check your pet thoroughly for ticks that may have jumped on you while you and your dog were outside. Honestly, even if you haven't been for a walk, it's still a good idea to check your dog for ticks. It is essential to check the head, ears, legs, and undercarriage, as ticks usually latch onto these areas. It's not uncommon for ticks to hitch a ride on a dog right into the house and then continue living right alongside you and the rest of your family.

Choose the proper tick treatment

There are many options and applications (topical spot-on products, collars, newer oral chewable tablets). Regardless of the ones you ultimately choose to use, please remember

that these treatments are only effective when used regularly and following the manufacturer's instructions (if you're using a medication). Your veterinarian can help you select the safest and most effective products and determine the best dosing intervals.

Always protect yourself!

When walking your dog in tick-prone areas, it's essential to wear appropriate clothing to avoid picking up ticks yourself, putting your whole family at risk. Wearing light-colored clothing that covers your skin helps prevent tick bites. Never wear shorts; wear long pants and tuck them into your socks to protect your ankles. And when you return from a walk, check for ticks before entering the house.

Ticks crawl for some time before attaching, so there is a window of time when they can be removed before they could transmit disease. Have a friend help you if possible, or use two mirrors, as they often head "north" and could be wandering along your back, back of your neck, behind your ears, and along your hairline.

What do vets recommend for tick prevention

Topical tick medications

Topical tick medications are placed directly on your dog's skin. They kill and repel ticks when the tick lands on your dog, so ticks do not need to bite for the medication to work.

Oral tick medications

A tick must bite your pet and feed on its blood to die. This is where oral tick medications come into play: the dog ingests the pill, and that's it – the medicine moves throughout the dog's bloodstream. Admittedly, they are easier to administer than topical tick medications. But some owners prefer killing the tick before it even gets the chance to bite their pet.

Tick collars

Tick collars contain chemicals that offer ongoing protection for your pup rather than being administered by a topical drop on your dog's skin or via a pill. Some collars emit a type of gas that repels ticks. Others have medication that seeps into the dog's skin, so the tick is killed before they bite.

Work with your veterinarian to find the proper over-the-counter and prescription medications that work best for your dog. All dogs are different, so their tick prevention needs will be different, too. Vets recommend annual screening for tick-borne diseases as part of their overall tick prevention program. This way, they can check how effective the treatments are for the dog.

Regular prevention is important

There will be times when you won't see a tick on your dog before it latches onto its skin, so tick prevention needs to be part of your daily routine. It's recommended to always work with your veterinarian to see what works best for you and your dog. They know your pet's health and can recommend treatments and products that can help with tick prevention.

Food Safety



Nothing is better than an outdoor party or a backyard BBQ in the summer. While the food being cooked tastes great for us, some of it isn't the best for our pets.

Ensure your guests do not feed your pets any "people" food. If your dog (or cat) is visiting all the guests at your party (i.e., begging for food), it's difficult to keep track of where they are and what they are eating.

Keep alcoholic beverages away from pets

If your pet consumes alcohol, it will cause intoxication and lead to alcohol poisoning if they drink too much (though not common).

Even though your dog may not want a sip of your beer, they might enjoy lapping up fruity punches and cocktails. The pre-made mixers used in cocktails and punches may contain Xylitol, an artificial sweetener that can be harmful to dogs.

Mind your grilling activities

Chances are, whenever you cook on the grill, your pets (primarily dogs) will be attracted to the food you're preparing. Avoid letting them lick up the fat that drips from the meat since it is rich in oils that can lead to pancreatitis.

When using a charcoal grill, keep your dog from eating the coals. Even though charcoal is not poisonous, large pieces may cause obstructions and choking if consumed by your dog.

Human food and snacks

Many pet owners know that their pets should avoid certain foods, such as raisins, chocolate, garlic, and onions. Below are some common BBQ foods that can be dangerous to pets.

Bones. Sharing your grilled steak or chicken wings with your dog during summer is not a good idea. Dogs can choke on bones, especially chicken bones, which can cause serious damage to their mouths, throats, and intestines.

Raw meat. Salmonella and E.coli bacteria can be found in uncooked meat, which can harm dogs (and humans).

Hot dogs. Hot dogs may taste good to us, but they aren't good for your dog. Hot dogs contain seasonings like garlic, onion powder, monosodium glutamate (MSG), sugars, and sodium nitrate, which have been linked to cancer. A hotdog link can contain up to 600 mg of sodium, which is way too much for your dog. Lastly, hot dogs are a significant choking hazard!

Corn on the cob. It's not the corn itself that's the problem — it's the cob. This is one of the worst obstructions that dogs can get. If the dog swallows the corn whole and doesn't chew the cob, it doesn't break down. Sometimes, the cob will come out in the dog's stool, but it's rare. Dogs seldom pass corn cobs —



they just shrink-wrap down and cause an obstruction most of the time. Instead of letting your dog chew on a corncob, give him a safe, dog-appropriate treat to gnaw on.

Salty snacks. Popcorn, pretzels, peanuts, and potato chips are common party foods, but they're too salty for your pet. Seizures, vomiting, diarrhea, and fever are signs of sodium ion poisoning.

Ice cream. Most commercial ice creams are dairy-based, so it's best to avoid giving dogs a taste. Look for dog-appropriate ice cream treats at the supermarket instead.

Travel Safety



When planning a trip with your pet, there are many things to consider. High temperatures, traffic, and busy airports make summer travel especially challenging. So, to help keep everyone happy during summer excursions, we suggest following these tips.

Always plan ahead

Vacationing with your pet takes a little more planning than usual. You really want to think through every activity of your trip. Think about where you're going, how you're getting there, and what is needed to keep your pet healthy and happy.

Pet-friendly accommodations should also be considered when making your vacation plans. Also, keep in mind: Do you plan to engage in any non-pet-related activities? Or eat at restaurants that don't allow pets? Do not assume that a place or activity will allow your pet. It is best to call ahead and make arrangements in advance. Ensure you check with hotels, restaurants, bars, places to visit, and activities before arriving. Bringing your pet on vacation is pointless if you're going to leave him behind in a hotel!

Traveling by car

Humans are in the front

seats. You should not let your pet roam the car while you are driving. It is dangerous for pets to be left loose and a big distraction for the driver.

A carrier is a good idea for cats and dogs. Restrain carriers with a seat belt; this prevents them from bouncing or sliding. Pet stores sell restraints and seat belts, but they haven't been proven to reduce accidents or protect pets from injuries.

Keep the window up and the AC

on. If it's hot outside, keep cool with the air conditioner in your car.

We've all seen a car drive by with a window down and a dog's head sticking out, enjoying the breeze. However, this is not a safe idea and puts the dog at risk of being injured by flying debris. And it should go without saying never let your pet ride in the back of an open pickup truck.

Plenty of pee breaks. Be sure to stop frequently to let your pet out, stretch their legs, and go potty. You'll benefit from it, too! When you let your pet out of the car, make sure they are leashed and wearing the appropriate ID tags on their collar.

Never leave your pet alone in the car! It doesn't matter if you're just stopping for a quick snack. Any time spent within an enclosed vehicle is too long in the summer heat for your pet. Even if the temperature outside is 72°F (22.2°C), your car can reach 116°F (46.7°C) in just an hour. You wouldn't want to sit in a car at that temperature, so don't make your pet do it.



Traveling by plane

It is sometimes necessary to fly to your destination. Airlines only allow a limited number of pets per flight, and if your pet is traveling internationally or as cargo, flight preparation can take months. You should book your pet's flight ahead of time, especially if they are traveling in the cabin with you.

Here are some tips for flying with your pet:

Check with your airline. Make sure your breed is not restricted. Most airlines impose weight and size restrictions, and some breeds cannot fly at all. These breeds include Bulldogs, Boston Terriers, Pugs of all kinds, Boxers, Shih-Tzus, Mastiffs, American Bullies, Pit Bulls, and American Staffordshire Terriers.

Get health approval from your vet. Before taking your pet on a plane, ensure it is healthy enough to fly. It's very stressful for your dog or cat to fly, even more so when he is alone (without you) in cargo. Airlines usually require a veterinarian's health certificate to verify that your dog or cat is healthy.



Buy an airline-approved crate. You may already have a crate if you have a dog or cat at home. However, certain airlines require pets to travel in special airline crates.

- **Sizing.** Depending on your airline, you may need to meet specific requirements. Crates should provide your pet with plenty of room on all sides. For international

travel (and sometimes domestic flights), the standard crate size equals your pet's height plus half the length of his leg.

- **Nuts and bolts.** Plastic fasteners are not allowed only metal. Some pet crates are held together with metal bolts and plastic caps, which are permitted.
- **Single metal door.** Airlines usually prefer kennel crates with a single metal door rather than plastic doors that fold in the middle.

- **Sufficient ventilation.** Crates with two ventilated sides (along with a door) are required for domestic flights. All four sides of the crate must have air holes for international travel.
- **Food and water dishes.** A water and food bowl must be attached to the inside of the front door.
- **Document info and feeding instructions.** The crate should contain your pet's information, including his name, medication, phone number and address, final destination, flight number, and contact information for someone at your destination. You should also attach your dog's feeding and care instructions and a bag of food to the top of the crate. Again, each airline is different, so double-check to ensure you include everything required.
- **Secure the crate door.** Crates must be zip-tied shut to prevent the doors from opening during flight.
- **"Live Animal" stickers.** This sticker should be placed on all four sides of the crate. Most airlines will give you the stickers, so call ahead of time if you don't already have some at home.

Ask to board early

It's always good to ask! Getting yourself and your pet situated before your flight can take some time, and having a few extra minutes can help you both stay calm.

Ensuring a low-stress and safe trip with your pets, whether by car or plane, helps keep everyone happy on vacation!



Summer is the perfect time to spend with your family, including your pets. With a little planning and prevention, our four-legged friends can enjoy the outdoors and summer getaways right along with us while staying safe and healthy at the same time.