



# The Woof-Meow Show

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The "Woof-Meow" show is on every Sunday at 8:30PM on WVOM, 103.9FM, the Voice of Maine. Hosted by Don Hanson of Green Acres Kennel Shop, the show focuses on educating dog and cat guardians about their dogs and cats.

**AIR DATE: 21MAY06**

**GUESTS: Don Hanson & Mike Dow**

## Summer Pet Care Tips

### 1. How does hot and humid weather affect our pets?

High temperatures and humidity affect our pets in the same way they affect many of us. Among other things, animals have less energy, eat less and often need to drink more fluids.

### 2. Can the heat be dangerous to our pets?

Heat can be very dangerous to animals. When outside, both dogs and cats need to have access to shade and fresh, cool water at all times. When the temperature climbs above 70 degrees, give serious consideration to keeping your dog at home, rather than taking him along in the car. Keep in mind that if it is 85 degrees outside, the temperature inside your car can reach 102 degrees in only ten minutes, even with the windows opened a crack. It takes only 30 minutes for the temperature to reach or exceed 120 degrees, and it is very easy to become delayed on what was supposed to be just a quick trip into the store.

### 3. How does the heat affect our pets?

Pets are susceptible to heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Early warning symptoms of heat exhaustion are:

- Rapid breathing
- Heavy panting
- Excessive salivation
- Fatigue
- Muscle tremors
- Staggering

Heat stroke is even more serious. Signs of heat stroke include:

- High body temperature
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Bright, red gums
- Collapse

**4. What should I do if I suspect my pet is suffering from heat stroke?**

I'm not a veterinarian, but based on conversations with several veterinarians and a review of a pet first aid book, you should take the following steps:

- U Get your pet out of the heat and **immediately** call your veterinarian.
- U If a veterinarian is not available, take your pet's temperature rectally. A dog's normal body temperature is 102°F and a cat's ranges from 100.5 to 102.5.
- U Mist the pet with cool, not cold, water for several minutes. Do not place an overheated animal in cold water.
- U Place wet towels on the pet's neck, chest and limbs to aid in cooling.
- U Continue to take the pet's temperature and stop cooling once the temperature falls to 103-104°F.
- U Offer the pet cool water or ice chips, but do not force them to drink. Many times pet's suffering from heat stroke will not drink.
- U Get your pet to a veterinarian as quickly as possible for a follow-up examination.

**5. Are there other factors we should consider to make our pets safer and more comfortable in the summer heat?**

- U Animals with brachycephalic faces, such as Boxers, Pugs, Bulldogs and Persians are not able to pant as effectively as those with longer noses and are thus more prone to heat exhaustion.
- U Dark colored coats absorb heat more readily, putting these pets at an increased risk for heat exhaustion.
- U Pets with longer coats need to be groomed regularly to keep their fur from becoming matted. When their coat becomes matted it holds the heat and humidity in, causing discomfort and skin irritations.
- U Shaving pets with long coats can actually make them more uncomfortable. They depend on their coats to keep them cool and to protect their skin from over exposure to the sun. Removing their fur takes away their insulation from the heat and exposes their skin to the sun's harsh rays. These pets can get sun burned and you may need to apply sun screen when they are outdoors.
- U Asphalt roads and paths are incredibly effective at absorbing the sun's heat. Avoid walking your pet on asphalt as sensitive feet can easily get burned.
- U Walk you pet during the coolest parts of the day.
- U If you take your dog to the beach, make sure you bring plenty of fresh water and shade. If they go in salt water rinse them off afterwards to prevent skin irritation.

**6. Are there other hazards we need to worry about in the summer?**

- U Pets require 100% supervision around swimming pools, and need to be taught how to find the easiest exit from the pool.
- U Life jackets are always a good idea when we take our pets boating even if they are good swimmers.
- U Open windows and doors can lead to escapes and accidental falls; screens are not as secure as they look.
- U Lawns and gardens treated with chemical fertilizers, insecticides and herbicides can all be hazardous to our pets. Since animals walk through life naked, they have much more exposure to these hazards, which are ingested when they lick their feet and fur.
- U Think twice before taking your pet to Fourth of July festivities or other large gatherings, unless your pet has been properly socialized to this level of stimulation. Loud noise, bright flashes of light, large crowds and intoxicated people can be very frightening to pets, possibly causing them to run away or behave aggressively out of fear.