



Limerick Veterinary Hospital

"Trust Your Best Friends To Us"

ANIMAL EMERGENCIES

610-489-2848

Limerick Veterinary Hospital provides 24 hour emergency on call service to our community. Our answering service will contact the veterinarian on call. The veterinarian will call you back and arrange to see your pet. If you do not receive a call within 10 minutes, please call back. Our veterinarians are trained to deal with most emergencies that your dog or cat might experience. We do not provide emergency care to birds. Depending on the veterinarian on duty we may provide care for other exotic pets. If it is in your pet's best interest we will refer you to another emergency hospital. In the case of toxin ingestion we may request that you call animal poison control. The number is listed below.

Limerick Veterinary Hospital provides 24 hour care for our hospitalized patients. We have veterinary technicians working around the clock to care for your hospitalized pet and to assist the veterinarian should an emergency arise.

ASPCA ANIMAL POISON CONTROL CENTER: 888-426-4435

INTERNAL PARASITES

A parasite is a living organism which feeds on/in other living organisms, the host. Parasites are responsible for significant disease and death in animals and humans. It is essential to treat and prevent parasitism in order to keep your pet healthy.

Roundworms – Intestinal

Roundworms are white to cream colored, round bodied worms resembling spaghetti. Roundworms mature in the small intestine and the young cross the placenta and infect the prenatal puppy as well as migrate to the mammary glands, which are ingested by the nursing pups. Roundworm infestation will be signaled by the pets having a “pot-bellied” appearance, intermittent diarrhea, dull coat and mature worms may be visible in vomit or in stool.

Hookworms – Intestinal

Hookworms are short, thick, hook-shaped worms. They mature in the small intestine and can be the result of a pet ingesting an infected rodent, through skin penetration and mother to offspring. Signs of hookworm infestation include dark colored diarrhea (blood), weakness and weight loss.

Whipworms – Intestinal

Whipworms are slender whip-like worms with one thin end and the other thick end. Whipworms occur in pets by ingestion of the eggs through grooming or ingesting an infected animal. Worms mature in the cecum and large intestine. Signs of whipworms include profuse diarrhea and weight loss.

Tapeworms – Intestinal

Tapeworms are white worms which appear as “rice” and can often be found on a pet’s stool or around the pet’s anus. Tapeworms occur in pets through the ingestion of a rodent, by grooming or by ingesting fleas. Signs of tapeworms include an increase in appetite without weight gain, dull coat and scooting/licking of the rectum.

Heartworms – Circulatory

Heartworms mature to spaghetti-like worms in the pet’s heart and lungs. These worms will not be visible to the owner as in other worms such as intestinal worms. Heartworms are spread to pets by mosquito bites which carry the larval form of the parasite. Signs of heartworm include coughing, weakness after exercise and a lack of stamina. The parasite is identified through a blood sample.

Coccidia and Giardia – Intestinal

These are single celled protozoa, not visible to the naked eye. Infection usually occurs due to overcrowding, where sanitation conditions are poor such as in puppy mills, kennels or animal shelters. Signs of infection include a very odorous diarrhea, watery or mucousy stools and poor overall health. These parasites are identified through a stool sample and sanitation is the best prevention.

Basic Obedience

This is a basic manners course, teaching sit, down, stay, leave it, wait command and overall proper leash walking and good behavior.

The ultimate goal for this course is as follows:

You can get your dog's attention quickly, even when surrounded by distractions.

Your dog can walk on leash without pulling.

Your dog will sit calmly by your side when approached by another person.

Your dog can complete a sit-stay with you across the room. Once the stay is finished you can call your dog to you.

Your dog can complete a down-stay with you across the room. Once the stay is finished, you can walk back to your dog's side without him getting up.

You are able to keep control of your dog at all times, no matter what is going on around him.

You remain consistent with your corrections while maintaining a calm and patient attitude.

EAR CARE

The ears of a normal dog or cat should be free of discharge and odor. Small amounts of dirt may be removed with a moistened cotton ball, but you should avoid the use of cotton tipped applicator unless directed by your veterinarian. Signs of an infection include ears with moderate amount of discharge, ears that are red , have a foul order, are painful and a dog or cat that is shaking his/her head. If any of these signs are present, your pet should be examined by a veterinarian.

There are many common ear problems with dogs and cats. Puppies and kittens sometimes have ear mites which show themselves as a black discharge from the ears and cause the ears to become very itchy. Some breeds of dogs, like spaniels, bloodhounds and basset hounds have long ears which cover the ear canal. This leads to an excess of moisture and a good environment for bacteria and yeast to grow. Other breeds such as poodles have a lot of hair in their ears which also allow bacteria and yeast to grow. The hair can be trimmed as part of your pet's routine grooming. Another common ear problem in animals is related to skin allergies. Because the ears are an extension of the skin, any skin infection caused by allergies may cause the ears to become inflamed as well.

The neglect of any ear problem may result in chronic inflammation or infection. This can lead to unnecessary pain, surgery or hearing loss for the pet if not corrected. Please ask your veterinarian for proper ear cleaning techniques and supplies.

345 W. Ridge Pike Limerick, PA 19468 P- 610-489-2848 F- 610-489-0618

Paws@limerickvet.com

ELECTIVE SURGERIES

Spay/Castration

Eliminates unwanted pregnancies

Decreases wandering instinct in males

Decrease the incidence of urine marking in cats

Decreases the threat of pyometra (infected uterus)

Decreases the incidence of mammary cancer in females

Reduces the threat of prostatic disease and testicular cancer

Eliminate female heat cycle which may occur every three to four weeks in cats

Control fighting of territorial males

Requires one day in the hospital

Suture removal is necessary for all canines and female felines 14 days after surgery

It is important to keep your pet on a leash when outdoors and keep as calm as possible while he/she heals

Discourage cleaning and licking of wound and no bathing until after the suture removal

These surgeries are usually performed 6 to 8 months of age

Dentals

This procedure is important for the health of your pet's mouth. Dental problems include tartar build up, gingivitis, painful abscesses and bad breath. These are procedures that should be done every few years or more frequently if it is a reoccurring problem. The procedure involves scaling, polishing and fluoride treatment along with evaluation of the teeth to prevent loss of teeth later in life.

Dental Procedures

Dental procedures in dogs and cats are much more involved than the same procedure in people. The primary reason is the need for anesthesia. It might sound silly, but we cannot convince our canine and feline patients to lie back and hold their mouths open so we can examine and clean their teeth.

The first step is a complete physical examination. This gives us an idea of general, overall health. If we are able to do an oral exam we will, but a thorough oral exam can only be done under anesthesia. Depending on the age of the animal, pre-anesthetic blood work to check organ function and for signs of disease may be required. If all of these look good we can proceed to the dental.

The day of the procedure the pet is examined again to make sure nothing has changed. An intravenous catheter is placed and intravenous fluids are administered. An anesthetic protocol is selected which is most appropriate for your pet and its current health status. Once anesthetized with injectable anesthesia an endotracheal tube is placed to protect the respiratory system from the water used in the procedure. All dogs are placed on inhaled anesthesia. Cats may be placed on inhaled anesthesia depending on their health status.

Finally we can get to the teeth. They are cleaned both manually and with an ultrasonic cleaner just like at your own dentist. Once they are cleaned, each tooth is examined individually for fractures, wear, loss of gum, loss of bony support and cavity like holes. If there are any problems dental x-rays will be taken to further identify the extent of the damage. At this point a decision will need to be made if the tooth is healthy enough to be left in place. If teeth are surgically removed, pain relievers and antibiotics may be administered. Occasionally a root canal will be recommended which would require referral to a veterinary dentist. After any problems with the teeth are dealt with, the teeth are polished and the animal is removed from anesthesia. Your pet's recovery is monitored by a technician until it is awake. Once the animal is awake it can be sent home. It may go home with antibiotics and pain relievers for you to administer at home.

The pet may be groggy for a day after the procedure, but most will eat their regular food the following day no matter how extensive the procedure was. You may notice some drooling and even some bloody saliva. This is acceptable as long as it is not severe and you're pet is responding well to you. If you have any concerns during the recovery period do not hesitate to call. A veterinarian is always available. In a few days your pet should feel much better than before the procedure. We offer a free re-evaluation two weeks after the procedure to check healing and to discuss your home dental care.

DENTISTRY

Dental Health

Your pet's teeth are just as important to them as your teeth are to you. That is where, as part of their yearly physical exam, regular dental care begins.

Tartar is composed of various mineral salts, organic materials, bacteria and food particles. In the early stages of accumulation, the material is soft, called plaque, but later hardens and sticks to teeth... Continued accumulation causes red, inflamed gum tissue, known as gingivitis and can eventually lead to tooth loss.

Prevention

Feed hard / coarse food

Provide hard rubber, chew toys or hard treat foods, remembering that the treat foods are a source of calories and may lead to obesity if too many are given.

Brush your pet's teeth regularly, i.e., 5-7 times per week. This is often easier said than done, but the effort is worth it. Dogs tend to be more tolerant than cats. It is especially good to start young animals on this preventative, as they will get used to having their mouths worked in and accept this approach much easier.

There are special enzymatic toothpastes available. Abrasive dental cleaning pads are also helpful in cleaning teeth. Any soft bristled toothbrush will work. Never use human toothpaste.

The most effective way to ensure good dental health is to have regular professional cleanings as needed.

Notify your veterinarian

If your pet has bad breath

If your pet has bleeding gums

If your pet refuses to eat or has discomfort when chewing

It may be necessary to see your pet sooner than at its annual physical exam. But remember, the best way to ensure your pet's good dental health is to have regular yearly checkups by your veterinarian

Hazardous Materials

Many substances and objects that are common to humans can be harmful to pets. Even chemicals made specifically for pets can be harmful if overdosed. Flea products are a good example of this. Cats and kittens can be poisoned if the product is not specified for their species. An overdosed pet may display the following signs: excessive salivation, vomiting, diarrhea, restlessness and seizures. If you suspect a harmful reaction caused by a product, the first thing to do is to bathe the animal immediately with a mild soap or shampoo and call the veterinarian. Flea products should always be used with caution on puppies and elderly dogs.

Common pain relief medications can be toxic to your pets. **Tylenol, Advil, Motrin, Aleve** and **Nuprin** should all be avoided. If you feel that your dog or cat needs some medication for pain. Please contact a veterinarian for a safe drug and a safe dosage

Chocolate in excessive amounts can be harmful to dogs. Bakers chocolate and dark chocolate are most harmful. Store chocolate in a safe place to ensure it is out of your pets reach.

Anti-freeze is one of the most deadly chemicals to your pet. Pets are attracted to anti-freeze because of its sweet taste. Keep anti-freeze in areas where your pet will not go and clean up spills immediately. If you suspect your pet has consumed anti-freeze, call the veterinary hospital immediately.

Rat poison can also be extremely deadly. Make sure all rat poison is kept in an area inaccessible to your pet, or consider the careful use of other means of rodent control.

Xylitol is an artificial sweetener used in many low calorie or sugar free products. While it has little to no effects on the human body, it can be fatal to dogs. Symptoms can be seen within 30 minutes of a dog ingesting a food containing xylitol. As little as one piece of gum can be toxic to a 20 pound dog. There is no antidote for xylitol but supportive care can save your dog's life.

Many sugar free gums contain this product including Trident, Orbit, Stride and Icebreakers. Other products known to contain xylitol are Tic Tacs, sugar free pudding, sports and energy drinks, some mouthwashes and toothpastes. This list continues to grow. If you suspect your dog may have ingested a xylitol product, seek veterinary care immediately.

Grapes and **Raisins** cause kidney failure in some dogs. It is not known what the toxic compound is or how much it takes to cause kidney failure. Products containing grapes and raisins, like cookies, muffins and cakes should also be avoided.

Unfortunately, even small toys and rawhides can be harmful to your pet. Choose toys your pet cannot chew into small pieces and swallow whole. String, yarn and tinsel can become harmful to cats. Panty hose and underwear are targets which young dogs love to chew and swallow. If swallowed, these items for both cats and dogs can cause serious harm to the digestive tract, possibly requiring surgery. Do not feed dogs chicken bones.

They splinter and can cause damage to the intestines.

Grooming

Regular bathing and brushing of your dogs coat is an important part of keeping them happy and healthy. While there are a lot of things you can do at home, such as bathing, brushing, and trimming their nails, sometimes dogs require a little extra.

Bringing your dog to a professional to have it bathed or groom regularly can prevent skin problems, fleas or ticks, and matting. Also frequent trips to a groomer at a young age can help show your puppy that being bathed and groom is nothing to be fearful of.

At Limerick Veterinary Hospital through our full service kennel, Happy Tails Activity Center, we offer both bathing and grooming to our clients. Bath's can be scheduled Monday to Friday and appointments are necessary. Grooming is also by appointment only and can vary depending on the groomer's availability.

Our bathing and grooming services include a shampoo and conditioner treatment of your dogs' coat, as well as a nail trim, ear cleaning, and a full brush out and blow out of your dogs' coat. Our groomer and bather have 20 years experience and are here to provide the highest quality of care to your pet.

Our groomer services all breeds with everything from puppy cuts to show cuts, moisturizing and anti-itch treatments, as well as de-matting. Our groomer does not groom felines. Pricing varies depending on the cut, the condition of the dogs, and if your dog is matted.

All dogs coming in for bathing and grooming must meet all the vaccination requirements of Happy Tails Activity Center and Limerick Veterinary Hospital as well as have a current county dog license. On the morning of your dogs' spa day they will need to arrive between 7am and 9:30am and our staff will call you when your dog can go home. Your dog will have water available to them as well as receive walks by our kennel staff.

Please call if you have any questions or to speak with our groomer.

610-489-2848 x22 or 610-409-9197

EXTERNAL PARASITES

A parasite is a living organism which lives and feeds on/in another living organism, the host. Parasites are responsible for significant disease and death in animals and humans. It is essential to treat and prevent parasitism in order to keep your pet healthy.

Fleas

Fleas are small brown-black wingless insects 2-4 millimeters in length. They have flat bodies which aid them when running through animal hair. Adult fleas can be found anywhere on the animal. Eggs, larvae and pupae are found in bedding, carpets and floor crevices. Presently there are monthly topical insecticides you can apply to your pet to prevent flea infestation. Fleas are also an intermediate host for tapeworms.

Ticks

Ticks are small, round, brown arachnids with eight legs. Ticks can be found anywhere on the pet, but are more frequently seen around the head and ears. Cats are less frequent to have ticks because of their cleaning and grooming habits are more thorough than in dogs. As in fleas, there is a topical insecticide to prevent your pet from getting ticks. It is important to remove any ticks you find on your pet as soon as possible. If you live in a heavily wooded area or in and around tall grass, you will be advised to have your dog receive a Lyme disease immunization. Deer ticks are the primary carrier of Lyme disease.

Mites

Ear mites are extremely tiny creatures, about .44mm long with a flattened body and 8 legs. A pet with ear mites will shake and scratch its ears constantly. The pet's ears may be red and irritated, crusty and have a discharge. Your veterinarian will clean your pet's ears and prescribe a miticide as treatment.

Sarcoptes and Demodex are mange mites, which burrow into the skin around the head, ears, shoulders and neck. The presence of mange mites causes great irritation and itching, which produces lesions with crusting skin. Left untreated the skin can become thickened, wrinkled and hairless.

Lice

Lice are 1.5 mm long with flattened bodies. They can occur anywhere on the pet. Severe cases can cause hair loss, severe itching and anemia from blood loss. Treatment is performed by applying insecticides to the pet.

CANINE VACCINATIONS

RABIES

A virus that attacks the nervous system of all animals, including humans, causes rabies. It is always fatal and there is no cure. Highly effective vaccines are readily available. Unvaccinated animals who have been exposed to the virus through fighting, etc., must be humanely destroyed or face quarantine. State law requires having your pet vaccinated for rabies!!

DHPP

DHPP is a combined vaccine that protects against several diseases. Distemper is a virus which affects the GI tract, respiratory system and, in later stages, the nervous system. Distemper is usually fatal. This vaccine also protects against virally induced form of Hepatitis. Parainfluenza is a virus that affects the respiratory tract. Parvovirus is an intestinal virus that causes vomiting, diarrhea, fever and depression. Vaccination is the only protection against this often-fatal disease.

BORDETELLA

Bordetella is an upper respiratory infection that can cause acute bronchitis in your pet. Symptoms include a persistent dry hacking cough. This infection is highly contagious to other dogs, and is usually found where there are a large number of dogs in one area. Vaccination is recommended for any dog that comes in contact with other dogs out on the street, in the park, at the groomers, at dog shows, in day care or in a kennel.

CANINE INFLUENZA

Canine Influenza Virus is related to the human influenza virus but is not contagious to people. The signs are similar to Kennel Cough, but it can be difficult to distinguish between the two. Symptoms include cough, fever, nasal discharge, lethargy, and the loss of appetite, but can progress to pneumonia in severe cases. The vaccination is a series of two shots separated by two weeks. Reasons for vaccination include boarding, grooming, day care, puppy classes or dog parks.

If your dog is exposed frequently to wooded areas (on walks, hunting, or camping) or if you have exposure to wildlife in your yard, please read this:

LEPTOSPIROSIS

Leptospirosis is an important disease that is also classified as zoonotic -- i.e. humans can contract the infection from secretions from infected animals. These bacteria are maintained in the kidneys of the host, and can be spread between animals via direct or indirect contact. Direct transmission involves contact with infected urine (raccoon, possum, skunk, mouse, rat), bite wounds or ingestion of infected tissue. Indirect transmission involves exposure with contaminated water sources, soil, food, and bedding. These bacteria can also survive for several months in moist soil that has been saturated with urine. In addition to the kidneys, these bacteria can also affect the liver, the eyes, and the vascular system. Some cases can be fatal if left untreated.

LYME DISEASE

Lyme disease is a tick-borne bacterial disease affecting animals and humans. Any tick can carry this disease; primarily the deer tick. When an infected tick bites, the bacterium is transferred to the blood of your pet. The symptoms of Lyme disease include: lethargy, loss of appetite, depression, fever, lameness, and joint pain. The disease is difficult to diagnose and does not show the red target area around the tick bite as seen in people. Prevention involves strict control of ticks on your pet and environment.

MICROCHIPS/TATTOOS

Identification of your pet is highly important in our mobile society. A simple system is a tag on the collar with a phone number. All pets that go outside should have a tag. A tag can be removed or lost, but if your pet has one it is likely to be returned.

A microchip is a permanent form of identification. It cannot be lost or removed. For dogs, the microchip number can also be used to obtain a permanent license. The microchip is implanted under the skin with a large needle. It can be implanted at any time. The animal does not need to be anesthetized to have it implanted, but it is convenient to do it when the pet is being neutered. The pet must be actively scanned with a specific sensor to read the number. Most veterinary hospitals and rescues have these scanners and all found pets should be scanned to try to determine the pet's identity. Unfortunately the microchip does not have any locating ability.

Tattoos can also be used for identification. For dogs, the tattoo number is supplied by the county. This number is tattooed on the inside of the dog's hind leg. The number can be read by anyone provided they can get ahold of the dog and turn it on its back. The downside of the tattoo is that it must be tattooed under anesthesia and the tattoo could be changed but only with great difficulty. The tattoo application must be obtained from the Montgomery County Dog License Bureau prior to the procedure being performed.

CANINE BEHAVIOR

House Training

Keep your pet on a strict schedule (feeding times, walks, etc.)

Always use a leash

Always take your dog to the same location for elimination

Reward with treating when he/she gets it right

Punishment does not work!!

Use a crate to confine when you cannot watch your pet

If your pet must be home for an extended period of time (over four hours) arrange for someone to walk your pet

If your puppy makes a mistake by eliminating in the house, it is our fault, not the puppies. While observing the puppy, he/she will let you know when he/she needs to eliminate

Confine your puppy early during house training. Eventually he/she will be allowed run of the house as he/she gets older. It is up to you to help your pet succeed!

CANINE SOCIALIZATION

The most important time is 8 to 18 weeks.

Take your puppy on trips, new experiences, new places, and new people.

Enroll your puppy in a socialization class to socialize them with other puppies and people. Puppies without early socialization may become fearful of certain ages of people such as children. They may also become fear biters and/or aggressive. Socialization classes are offered here at Limerick Veterinary Hospital.

Have the puppy become accustomed to the car, vacuum, loud appliances, and use of in-house steps for going up and down.

Have the puppy become accustomed to the leash before any leash training is started.

Crate training is an excellent way to teach your puppy to be alone. Crate training should begin immediately after getting the puppy.

Interaction with the puppy while he eats is important. Establishing that it is normal to be bothered while eating will prepare the dog for future encounters with friends or children who bother the dog while he eats.

Your puppy needs to become de-sensitized to unfamiliar conditions. Holding the puppy on his/her back, opening the puppy's mouth, playing with the ears, and touching the toes will have great benefits later in the dog's life when he/she has to be given medication or during trips to the vet.

Enrolling your puppy into a doggie daycare program will help your puppy get used to being away from home for a short period of time. They will get to interact with other people and puppies. This will allow your puppy to feel comfortable even when you are not around. This will be beneficial in the event you want to go on vacation and cannot take your puppy with you. Limerick Veterinary Hospital offers a daycare program for puppies and dogs of all ages.

SEASONAL PRECAUTIONS/ WINTER

The winter months can be especially hard on pets both outside, as well as in the house.

Homes that are kept on the cool side in winter may have pets, particularly cats, seeking out warm spots near radiators, wood stoves, furnaces, baseboard heating and fireplaces. Make sure these areas are pet friendly and designate a spot for your pet by placing a pet bed in that area. Be sure that the pet is not getting too warm and that it's bedding is not slowly burning. **Be particularly careful of using the clothes dryer around heat seeking cats!**

The holidays are a busy time in most homes. Do not neglect the pet or their safety at these times. Electrical cords tinsel and pine trees present the pet with seasonal dangers. Tinsel should be avoided all together. Electrical cords should be taped together and placed up away from the pets reach. The Christmas tree should be off limits to pets with no one at home. The holidays also mean more people food in larger amounts and more chocolate. Remember, people food is for people and when you are not around, the food should be put away. Chocolate is very deadly to pets, keep it locked away.

Antifreeze has a sweet taste to it and in winter when many sources of water are frozen, a puddle of anti freeze can quench an outside pet's thirst. Antifreeze in the smallest amount such as a lick can be fatal. Avoid spills and if they occur, clean them up immediately.

Outside pets need adequate shelter from the rain, wind and snow. Any shelter should be off the ground and well insulated. A door is ideal to any pet shelter to keep out the wind. During severe weather your pet should be brought inside. If you suspect your pet has been frostbitten, remove any snow and ice and apply warm, moist towels frequently to the affected areas, call the veterinarian at once.

Some snow removal and ice melting products can be harmful to your pet Read the precautions before , applying to your walks and driveway .If your pets has any activity on public roads in winter, it may be best to wash his / her feet as they come into the house.

Water is extremely important to pets in winter. Outside pets must have an adequate supply of water to maintain their body heat and avoid dehydration. The neighbor's pool bath and creek in the woods are now frozen. Water bowls should be checked at least twice a day in the winter time.

Cats will seek out warm spots in the winter and a freshly parked car in your driveway is a constant target. If you are coming and going from your home, be sure to pound the hood of your car or honk before starting the engine. If your cat has a greasy, black smudges in winter, you can bet that he / she is an warm engine cuddlier.

CO2 LASER

Limerick Veterinary Hospital has new technology resulting in greater comfort and better healing for many of our patients. The standard metal scalpel has been the instrument for hundreds of years in medicine but it now has been outclassed by the carbon dioxide laser. Use of the LASER insures an almost bloodless surgery field together with a great reduction in pain because the nerves to the tissue are actually sealed by the procedure.

Limerick Veterinary Hospital is one of the few hospitals in the area to offer this modern LASER process.

We are offering all pet owners the use of the LASER for their pet's neutering. Use of the LASER for routine neutering can reduce bleeding and keep post surgical pain to a minimum.

We would be glad to discuss this surgical alternative with you when you are making plans to have your pet spayed or castrated. There is an additional fee for the use of this high tech instrument but we feel it is money well spent.

Pre Anesthetic Blood Work

Limerick Veterinary Hospital recommends that all animals have blood work before anesthetic procedures. Blood work results give us insight about the health of the internal organs which cannot be determined on a physical exam. We require all animals over six years of age to have a complete blood count and chemistry panel before anesthesia. The complete blood count provides information about anemia, infection and parasitism. The chemistry panel helps to evaluate the liver, kidneys, pancreas and adrenal glands along with electrolyte, protein and blood sugar levels. These tests should be run a few days before the anesthetic procedure to allow time to address any problems. There is a small panel which can be run in-house the morning of the procedures on young animals, but is less comprehensive. Please ask your veterinarian about pre-anesthetic blood work before your pet's next anesthetic procedure.

SEASONAL PRECAUTIONS /SUMMER

It is great to enjoy summer with your pet. It is also the time when your pets have the greatest risk of injury and heat related problems. Here are some tips to keep your pet cool in the summer.

Heat is the number one problem for pets in the summer. Never leave your pet in a parked car. Even cars parked in shade with the windows cracked will quickly turn into an oven. Be careful not to over exert your pet by walking or exercising during the hottest part of the day. Sunburn can occur to those pets with short or no hair and pets with pink skin and white hair are especially vulnerable to sunburn. Limit their exposure to the sun and use a children's approved sun block if needed. All pets need adequate fresh water often. Dogs sweat through the pads of their feet and also by panting. Evaporation from wet surfaces of their mouth and nose helps lower body temperature. Be mindful of hot pavements and hot sand at their beach. Sensitive paws can burn easily. Inside pets should have circulating air by air conditioning or a pet proof fan.

Signs of heat stroke include rapid panting, hot skin, twitching and a dazed look. Wrap the pet in towels soaked in cool water, not cold water. In severe cases, place the pet in the bathtub. Heatstroke can be fatal, see your veterinarian as soon as possible.

Summertime is the time when your pet is more likely to come in contact with other pets and wild animals. Vaccinations must be kept current to prevent your pet from contacting a disease from these chance encounters. Ensure that your pet is also properly identified and carries proof of vaccinations as well as a county license.

Little Beasties are at their peak in the summertime. Fleas, ticks and worms may try to use your pet as a source of food. See your veterinary team for prevention topical's and medications.

Please read any precautions on any herbicides and pesticides you may use on your lawn. Any contact with any lawn chemicals should be dealt with by washing the pet and contacting the veterinarian.

Summer is allergy season. People sneeze and pets scratch. Common pet allergies include grass, pollen and weeds. If your pet scratches excessively and /or chews at his /paws, he/she may have an allergy .Inform your veterinarian for a treatment plan.

SIGNS OF A SICK ANIMAL

Frequent or inappropriate urination can be signs of a urinary tract infection or diabetes. Frequent trips to the litter pan or straining to urinate can be a medical emergency.

Increase/Decrease in food intake

Increase/Decrease in water intake

Coughing or sneezing

Sleeping a lot or hiding

Inactivity

Bloated or distended abdomen can be a medical emergency

Crying or whining

Discharge from the eyes or eyes held closed

Warm/cold/ moist nose does not indicate if your animal is sick or isn't sick

Normal rectal temperature 100-102.5

Warmth of pet to the touch does not evaluate the pet's temperature, thermometer must be used rectally.