



In this month's issue



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Ever notice your cat or dog twitching? You might hear muffled meows or barks. Well, just like us, they are dreaming.

1 Summer Heat Stroke and Dogs

While chasing a ball at the park and taking trips to the beach might sound like fun, pet owners are being warned of the dangers of heatstroke this summer, particularly in dogs.



Heatstroke is one of the most catastrophic, and yet easily prevented, conditions that dogs can suffer.

“Dogs are so eager to please their owners; they often won't stop playing until their bodies can't take any more. Owners need to watch for warning signs of heatstroke such as heavy panting and act quickly,” said Murdoch's Dr Lawrie.

“Days with temperatures of over

30 degrees bring an increased risk of heatstroke – and days of 36C or more make it a lot harder for your dog to cool down.” When a dog overheats, the proteins in their cells start to break down, which can lead to the dog cooking internally. “Dogs can't sweat – they can

only pant, so they need to find other ways to cool down such as drinking water, seeking shade or laying on a cold surface to manage their body heat.

“Heatstroke can lead to vomiting and diarrhoea, bleeding disorders and even brain damage. If the dog survives one episode of heatstroke, it has a higher risk of future episodes as the area of the brain that responds to heat is forever changed.”





According to Dr Lawrie, dogs most at risk of heatstroke include those short-nosed breeds such as bulldogs that have existing airway abnormalities, older dogs that may have structural problems in their larynx, obese/over-weight dogs and dogs that have recently moved to hotter climates without having time to adjust.

“Particularly dangerous situations for all dogs include driving in cars if the dog’s area of the car is not air-conditioned or cross-ventilated, and exercising in the heat of the day – even if the dog seems to want to run or play. “And of course, dogs must not be left in cars, even with the windows down. They can die very quickly and you could face animal cruelty charges, let alone the sadness and trauma.”



Watch for signs of heatstroke. Dr Lawrie says it is easy to prevent heatstroke by avoiding activity in the middle of the day and providing ways to cool down, such as large ice blocks or a paddling pool and at least two bowls of fresh drinking water. Importantly, pet owners should monitor their animals for signs of heatstroke.

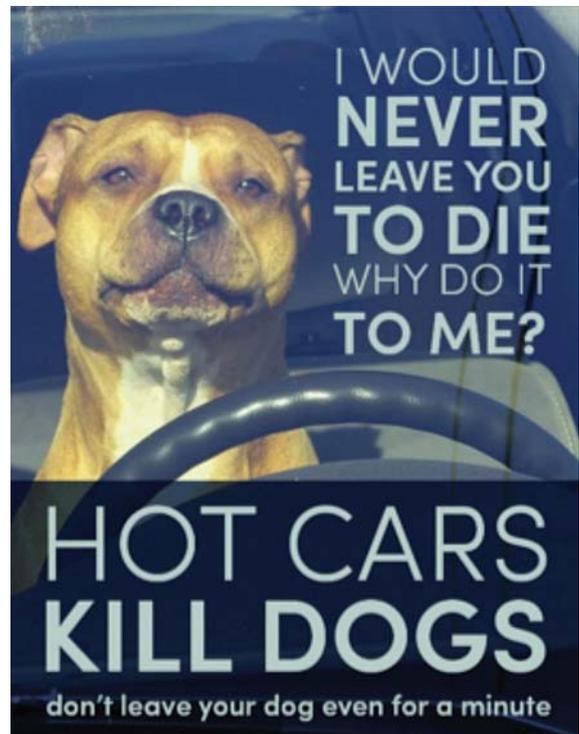
MPEC Veterinary Supervisor Dr Jill Griffiths said that heat stroke, snakebites and sunburn are all too common at this time of year – and can prove deadly for pets.

While most Australians are aware of the risks of prolonged sun exposure, Dr Griffiths said many pet owners don’t realise that animals can suffer sunburn too. Like humans, this can lead to deadly skin cancers. “It’s important that owners provide shade and apply sunscreen every day to the pink skinned parts of their animals,” she said. “Dogs love lying on their backs in the sun, so don’t forget to apply sunscreen to their bellies too.” Dr Griffiths said zinc cream works well, though there are animal-specific sunscreens available.

Dr Lisa Smart of Murdoch Pet Emergency Centre (MPEC) said pets had similar needs to their human companions on hot days.

“Our furry friends are at risk of developing heat stroke when temperatures spike, especially this early in the season when their bodies haven’t had a chance to acclimatise,” Dr Smart said.

Dr Smart said heat stroke cases brought to MPEC often involved pets who had been left in cars – even for only a few minutes – as well as those without access to shade. She said this included dogs tied up in backyards who had become exposed when the sun shifted in the sky, as well as dogs in the back of utes. Dogs in utes were also at risk for burns from metal heating up.



If you do think your dog may have heat stroke, they need immediate veterinary care.

Dr Smart advises people to soak their dog with water before loading them into the car to the vet and to keep the car air conditioner on high during the trip. She said to never cover your pet with wet towels, as these can act as insulation and prevent cooling.

Compiled from the following sources:

- <http://media.murdoch.edu.au/heat-wave-means-pet-precautions>
- <http://media.murdoch.edu.au/protect-your-pet-this-summer>
- <http://media.murdoch.edu.au/summer-time-can-be-deadly-for-hot-dogs>



2 The Toxic Pantry

We've heard of the delectable "death by chocolate" dessert and at worst – you may wind up with an upset stomach. But for a dog that same dessert could be a reality. While dogs can handle certain levels of chocolate if it is accidentally consumed, you should never intentionally feed your pets any type of chocolate. Xylitol (in

	Toxin	Amount	Symptoms
Alcohol	Ethanol	Even in small doses	Drunken behavior, trouble breathing, cardiac arrest
Avocado	Persin	Moderate to Significant	Diarrhea, vomiting, or constipation
Cocoa	Theobromine, Theophylline	6-9oz milk chocolate for 20lb dog, <6oz of dark	Vomiting, seizures, trouble breathing, arrhythmia
Coffee	Caffeine	150 mg per kg of body weight	Restlessness, vomiting tremors, arrhythmia, seizures
Grapes	Specific Toxin Unknown	19g per kg of body weight	Vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, kidney failure
Gum	Xylitol	Any exposure	Vomiting, lethargy, tremors, seizures, liver failure
Macadamia	Specific Toxin Unknown	As little as 6 nuts	Tremors, paralysis, vomiting, weakness
Dough	Yeast	Even small amounts	Gassiness, distended abdomen, vomiting, loss of coordination

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sugar-free candies and gums) is also toxic and as little as 3 pieces of sugar-free gum could kill a 29kg dog! Keep your sweets stored in a safe, pet-proofed location.

Source: <http://blog.wagwell.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/8-Poisonous-Foods-For-Dogs.jpg>

3 Looking After Pets During Fireworks

Many pet owners have owned a pet afraid of fireworks. Do you constantly worry about your pets during firework displays close to your home? Do you fear you may come home to find that your pets are unhappy or, even worse, injured because of the extremely loud noises? Here are the ways to keep your pet safe and cared for during fireworks.

- **Keep your pet in a confined area** - loud noises can make pets panic and in an effort to escape from the threat (the noise) they may even try to escape from their backyard.
- We recommend **keeping your pet inside** or out of harm's way when you are expecting loud noises in and around your backyard. Particularly if there are fireworks displays planned in nearby parks and community areas.



- **Distract** your pet by leaving a radio on.
- **Move fragile items and protect favourite furniture pieces** - some pets will show signs of destructive behaviour in their effort to move away from loud noises. Moving delicate items and furniture will help to protect your pet from harm if they are driven into frenzy.
- **Acknowledging your pet's distress** (e.g. cuddles, picking them up) will only encourage their feelings of anxiety. Ignoring them can be difficult but is often the

best method as long as they are not endangering themselves or others. By ignoring your pet you are reassuring them that there is nothing to be concerned about.

- **Relocation** - if all else fails, try relocating your pet to a safe haven. A friend of family's house or a place where they will be sheltered from the noise.

Source: <http://www.wikihow.com/Look-After-Pets-During-Fireworks>

4 Do Cats and Dogs Dream..?

"There is no reason to think that animals do not experience the same phenomena [as humans]," says Lisa Boyer, DVM, and owner of Veterinary Relief Solutions, Inc. in Roseville, CA. "The purpose of dreaming in people is suggested to be to maintain one's sense of self. The animal model is not clear, especially since we can't ask them."

Ask most pet owners, however, and they will tell you that their pets do indeed dream. "I'm certain dogs dream," says Anne Good, of Bennington, NE. "I have three—two Chihuahuas and an Italian Greyhound/Jack Russell mix—and each dreams on a regular basis. I know this because they are very audible when they are dreaming. Imagine the sounds from an early-'80s video game or cartoon aliens speaking; this is what it often sounds like. Other times it is muffled barking with their mouth shut."

Pet Owners Report Similar Findings

"I know for a fact that dogs dream," says Lisa Hanock-Jassie of New York City. "Our dog Hugo, a seven-year old 40kg Belgian Shepherd, dreams quite often. The first time I witnessed him dreaming was when he was about six months old. While he's dreaming his body quivers and his legs kick. And when he's having a truly active dream, which I assume is along the lines of his meeting up with his four-legged pals at the dog run, he voices a muffled bark in his sleep, mouth closed. It's hysterical."

Hali Chambers of Luray, VA, agrees. "My dog, Barkley, would twitch her paws like she was running and make a muffled 'woof woof.' I would whisper, 'Catch the squirrel, Barkley! Catch the squirrel.' Scientifically, we dream when we're in REM sleep. If you watch dogs sleeping, you'll see their eyes do the same thing."

Scientific studies have shown that sleeping dogs and cats exhibit eye twitching, lip movements, and vocalizations, which are all parts of REM sleep. Pet owners know what

scientists have proven—that dogs, cats, and other animals dream. "As an animal lover, animal rescuer, and volunteer at an animal shelter, I can say that without a doubt, dogs and cats dream," says James Malone of Palm Springs, CA.

Watching his cats sleep, Malone says, "You see their paws twitching and moving, their breathing increases and even becomes erratic or very fast; their whiskers twitch and their faces move and contort like a wild kitty cat doing a Jim Carrey routine."

"I believe that they have both good dreams and bad, and again, like us, what they dream of probably comes from subconscious thoughts and feelings, things they are going through, both good and bad."

So yes, they definitely dream. But scientifically speaking, what they are dreaming about remains a mystery.

Source: Michele Hollow:

<http://communitytable.com/255328/spaniel-puppy-and-kitten/>

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