

Waterloo West Animal Hospital

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August Newsletter

Summer Safety:

Please be careful outdoors with your pets for sun exposure. If you are starting up exercise after this long winter of inactivity or the ongoing rain and storms, go slowly and increase the intensity slowly to avoid sore muscles and injuries. **Heat stroke** should be avoided by limiting direct sun time, having water available (there are even now water bags and collapsible bowls for dogs to take on walks!) and choosing the time of day for excursions. We have already seen many cases in hospital of **heat stroke** and some have only had as little as 15 minutes of outdoor activity! If you suspect **Heatstroke**, it is an **Emergency** and must be treated immediately.

Skunks are a problem at this time of year for odour (unpleasant) and be careful of eye injuries from the acidity of the skunk spray on your pet's face. This should be treated immediately. Many **skunks** may just be out with their families in the evenings so if they are with their young they would feel even more at risk by our pets.

Any cottagers must remember that if this is your dog's first cottage year that **porcupines** are not a dog's best friend in spite of the interest your pet may show to this new creature. **Swimming** is an excellent exercise but please be cautious with muscle pains from overexertion and some dogs may need life jackets as well. Water is of concern if it is running fast, contaminated with bacteria or intestinal parasites or if your pet is not used to swimming particularly if you are out for long canoe trips. Once again pet life jackets do exist and are available through most pet supply stores. They also have a useful handle on the back to be able to lift your pet out of the water if necessary! Obviously most dogs do well without the extra help but some breeds do better than others and pets have been known to fall accidentally overboard and not all of them are able to tread water for several hours.

Allergies usually plague our pets this time of year as they do to ourselves. **Pollen** is particularly bad for susceptible pets. It sticks to the hair and so anytime they go out it can increase the itchiness for days. A simple run in park for these types of pets can be short-term joy for long term discomfort. Rinsing off the offending pollen or being covered in a T-shirt will often help the more severe cases, as well several medications. Remember Humans will sneeze and itch from allergies but dogs will usually only scratch and cats will itch and potentially develop asthma.

Insects should be avoided since **bees, wasps and spiders** can cause sudden severe allergic reactions and **flies** (deer, black and house flies) can injure ear tips, around eyes and cause localized skin infections.

Check your cat and dog for **ticks** after being outdoors. Wood and Deer Ticks **are in the city** and we must protect our pets from the illnesses the many ticks can carry (and don't forget us humans as well!) Running your hand over his or her body as you would to pet him/her should help you find any that may have attached themselves. If you live in a more country type area then please watch your cat or dog's ear tips for any bleeding crusting or itchiness. This is usually caused by a type of fly bite and is very uncomfortable but also very treatable. There are medications for dogs topically that will repel mosquitoes. Ask our staff for more information. Each summer has been very bad for **Sarcoptic mites** in the grass areas. These microscopic insects will cause itchy feet initially then eventually affect the whole body.

Waterways, especially if they have any shallow stagnant water can be bacterial breeding grounds and cause **skin infections and "hot spots"** and help spread **Leptospirosis** to dogs. Rodents and lagomorphs are the hosts for these bacteria and are spread by urine and other bodily fluids in waterways then swallowed by dogs to infect them.

When gardening, please be cautious with grub and insect poisons as many are toxic to your pet as well. Some can damage the nervous system and cause death a great but deadly example is slug bait! Some fertilizers can burn the inside of a pet's mouth if swallowing is attempted or even in some cases cause bladder and kidney problems and burn between their pads if they come into contact with the skin. Please read the instructions carefully and ask for advice when purchasing any of those products.

Finally and very very important, please be cautious when using "natural" products for fertilisation such as manure. Please ensure the source has not treated their animals with antibiotics and thus the bacteria in the manure may be resistant to many antibiotics and potentially toxic to your pet. We have already had to deal with some very nasty infections with multiple antibiotic resistances due to manure from antibiotic treated livestock and do not wish your pet to be the next sick or hospitalized patient. Please ask questions when purchasing anything you consider "natural" manure or not and use it in the soil and thus let it break down and protect your pet and feed the plants at the same time.

Have a safe and Happy Summer.

Happy Civic Holiday!