

Waterloo West Animal Hospital

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June 2010 Newsletter

Summer safety tips for your pets!

Heat can be a hazard whether you are out running with your dog (remember he or she will usually not be sensible and stop to rest when needed), driving around (closed windows for your pet or any medication that you may need to travel with) or just lounging in the backyard watching as you are gardening (they do not always go to shaded spots to watch your work!). Heat stroke is a serious and deadly concern for all our pets.

Wild animals are a problem for Odour such as skunks, Rabies for foxes, bats, and racoons and even what we would normally consider "pets" if they are not immunized or immunocompromized. It is transmitted through a bite wound and the current rabies vaccine that is used on your pet is very effective, but **please** be careful for yourself and children. All of the above animals help to keep up the general flea population in the grass around our homes and parks. Most of these mammals are also carriers of **Leptospirosis** and can be either tick carriers or aid in the **Lyme disease** tick population (Deer Ticks) movement in our cities. There are also vaccines to aid in the prevention of the Leptospirosis and Lyme disease, so please do not hesitate to ask about helping with your pet's good health. Any cottagers must remember that if this is your dog's first cottage year, then porcupines are not a dog's best friend, in spite of the interest your pet may show to this new and interesting creature. Some experienced dogs still maintain that fascination and need quills removed annually from their poor noses and faces!

Insects such as fleas and mites can hide in the grass thanks to the above outdoor friends. The wood tick is usually found in local heavily treed parks. If you live in a more country type area then please also 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.

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 so anytime they go out it can increase their itchiness for days. A simple run in the park for these susceptible pets can be short term of joy for a longer term of discomfort. Rinsing off the offending pollen or being covered in a T-shirt will often help the more severe cases as will several medications. Remember Humans will sneeze and itch from allergies but dogs and cats and ferrets will only scratch, develop asthma, ear problems etc.

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 on canoe trips. Pet life jackets do exist and are available through most pet supply stores. They also have a useful handle on the back to enable you to lift your pet out of the water if necessary! Obviously most dogs do well without the extra help but some breeds do much better than others and pets have been known to fall accidentally overboard, get caught in storms and most of us, as with them, cannot tread water for several hours!

Please enjoy the summer; let's hope for clement weather and Play Safe!