

# Summer time symptoms

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## Well at the time of writing, it's warm, sunny and the temperature is well into the mid 20's.

Lets hope this beautiful weather sticks around for the next few months! But, as wonderful as it is to see the sun, it's always best to be mindful of how the weather can be affecting our pets at this time of year. There are a few common complaints that tend to be more prevalent during the Summer months. Here's some advice on how to avoid them and make this Summer the best for you and your four legged friend.

### Feeling hot and bothered

Overheating is a potential danger for our pets at this time of year, but there are some simple steps we can take to minimise the risk. Even when the sky is overcast, heat can still build up significantly in enclosed spaces such as cars, caravans or conservatories with possible fatal consequences for any pet trapped inside. Animals can die in a matter of minutes so please, never leave a pet in this kind of environment, even for a short period of time.

Always ensure a cool, fresh supply of water in a shady area is available and keep water and food bowls extra clean. Walk your dog early or late when the day is at its coolest and take water with you.

Watch out for any of the signs of heatstroke - heavy panting, lying down on a walk, sickness, diarrhoea, red gums or stumbling. Add the emergency 24/7 care vet to your

mobile (Blacks Vets 01384 252509 for 24/7 Care) and keep it with you.

If your dog gets too hot, wrap them in a cool damp towel, changing it regularly with a fresh damp one. Heat stroke starts with excessive panting and can progress quickly to collapse which can be fatal. Take your dog to the nearest vet immediately if symptoms start.

### Brush away disease

We all know how important it is to regularly clean our own teeth, but did you know that this also applies to our pets as well? A build up of plaque on the teeth of both dogs and cats can harbour bacteria that can cause heart disease, as well as increasing tooth decay and Gingivitis (gum disease). Establishing a regular tooth cleaning habit, ideally every day, helps combat these issues and saves your pet a lot of pain and discomfort in the future. Use a specialist toothbrush for the job or a finger brush may be an option depending on your pet's size and breed. Make sure you also use a toothpaste that is specifically formulated for your animal as human toothpaste can be toxic to dogs and cats. Contact the nurse at your veterinary practice for advice and tips on teeth cleaning or book an appointment for one of the nursing team to clean your pet's teeth for you.

### Beware of lungworm

Angiostrongylus vasorum - it's here, it's in the Midlands and it kills. So very sad as there are very effective treatments to prevent it. Slugs and snails carry larvae which can be ingested by either eating the slug



or snail itself or ingested through contact with their slime on grass, in puddles, outdoor water bowls and toys, subsequently growing inside your pet. Prevention for lungworm is possible but it MUST be administered every month (and can be done at home) to maintain protection. It's a serious problem - 194 confirmed cases in dogs within a 50 mile radius of us here in Lye. Check out <http://www.lungworm.co.uk/lungworm-map/> with your postcode - it's travelling fast. Preventative treatment can only be prescribed by a vet.

### Feline foes

Many cat owners find that flea infestations increase during the Summer months when cats are inclined to be out and about more. It can be tricky to detect that your cat has fleas as many cats will eat them whilst grooming, so a thorough combing session with a special fine toothed flea comb is important. Do this over a white surface such as a large sheet of paper and any debris can be clearly seen and examined. If you find that your cat does have fleas, remember that the effectiveness of flea treatments can vary and products prescribed by your vet are usually the most thorough. Blacks runs a Healthy Pet Club which amongst many other services, includes a year round flea programme. Why not visit our website [www.blacksrvets.co.uk](http://www.blacksrvets.co.uk) for further details? Its worth knowing that a single female flea can lay up to 2000 eggs in her lifetime so its vital that you take steps to prevent reinfestation



after treatment. Help minimise this risk by vacuuming regularly and treating all soft furnishings with a specialist insecticide.

### Be careful in the garden

With gardens in full bloom and the whole family out enjoying the fine weather, our attention often turns to how we maintain our gardens. Slugs pellets are often in use, but be aware that many brands of slug pellet contain an ingredient called Metaldehyde which is poisonous to dogs and cats. Symptoms usually appear about an hour after they have been ingested and include incoordination, muscle spasms and seizures. An animal will require

urgent veterinary treatment under these circumstances, so please don't delay in seeking help straight away. Other common garden poisons can include some fertilizer and mulching products, compost and some varieties of plants such as lilies and crocuses. If in doubt, check it out with your vet!

### Bunny buddies

When the sun is out, us humans are more likely to be out enjoying the company of friends and family. Like us, rabbits are social creatures and need companionship to thrive, yet many live solitary lives. If you are considering an additional bunny companion, a male and female

pairing is usually the most successful combination if both are neutered. A same sex pairing can work, but has a much higher success rate if both animals are introduced at a young age and again, both are neutered. There is a host of useful information about this subject on the Pet Factsheet section of our website.

Its also at this time of year that cases of Fly Strike increase. This nasty condition is prevalent in rabbits with a moist or dirty bottom and occurs when flies lay eggs in the soft tissue. The eggs quickly hatch to maggots and burrow into the skin causing horrific wounds, which in some cases, can unfortunately be fatal. It is preventable, so please do contact us for advice and information if you have any concerns.

For further information on Blacks Vets visit [www.blacksrvets.co.uk](http://www.blacksrvets.co.uk)



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