



## Keeping Pets Safe in the Summer Months

By Deborah Brightstar  
The Doggie Diva

Yeah! The monsoon season is in full flow with lots to be grateful for as everything grows and we get a needed break from the scorching heat! I love the rain and thunderstorms. And, my dogs love the fresh moist earth to dig in to explore all the fresh smells the rains bring out. However, there are many hazards to protect your beloved pets from so they don't get in harms way. Here are but a few that come to mind to help you be on the look out:

1) Protect your pets from the heat. If you leave your pets outside make sure they have shade and lots of water to prevent dehydration and heat exhaustion. It is better if you don't leave them outside for extended periods of more than an hour or so when temperature reach in excess of 100 degrees. Keep in mind that your dogs are covered with hair and their body temperatures are several degrees higher than humans. They don't sweat to cool off. They pant and look for cool surfaces to lie on to cool down. So, please be sensitive to their comfort and health.

2) Protect your pets from unwelcome parasites. With the heat and all the rains everything is in a growth spurt, including ticks, fleas and mosquitoes. These unwelcome vagabonds may try to hitch a ride on one of your beloved furry family members bring all sorts of undesirable conditions such as Valley Fever, Heart Worm, and other unwanted diseases that could make your pet either very ill or even threaten their lives. Please protect them with such an easy and inexpensive solution as flea and tick treatments and heart worm medication. Be aware, that if you have not been giving your dogs heart worm medication yet, you must first get them checked to make sure they don't have it before starting them on a heart worm treatment, or you could kill them!

3) Protect them from snakes, frogs, spiders and lizards. With all the rain the Colorado River Toads have started popping out. All the heat has seemed to be fertile grounds for an unusually large breeding of lizards this year. Our dogs love to chase after those lizards, don't yours? They can spend hours focused on one area in our yard if they have ever spotted a lizard in that spot.

It is cute but something to be watchful of. Because, they can be lethal to your dogs if they catch and eat them! Dogs love to play with them but they are very toxic and many dogs have even died a violent death from eating them or having them in their mouths. The best way to protect them from getting poisoned from eating lizards or toads is to be outside with them, inspect your yard regularly, and not to leave them outside unattended for very long. Dogs tend to explore and inspect with their noses whereas cats with their paws. So, dogs are a bit more vulnerable to getting bit on their faces by spiders and lizards. So, be out there with them playing with and protecting them!

4) Storm anxiety. Some dogs suffer from storm anxiety and can get pretty distraught during the monsoon season. Their symptoms can range from mild to severe- shaking, pulling out their own hair, hiding, biting, excessive chewing. There are anti-anxiety drugs you can get from your vet to help ease your pet's stress and fear during a thunderstorm. Other remedies that have seemed to work with some of our clients have been to prepare your pets before the storms arrive with a storm CD played in the background during the day while you are away at work. When the storms come the music and storms on the CD can drown out a lot of the real storm noises outside. Another, option is to either be there with your pet or have someone else there to comfort and console them through the storm. Whatever method you choose, your pet will be grateful and you will have a deeper bond having made your pet feel safer.

If you are anything like me, you consider your pets as part of your family. So, why not take care of them with the same consideration and concern you would any other family member? They are at your mercy for their care and quality of life. Please make sure they are safe so that you can enjoy many more wonderful years of their unconditional love and companionship! Enjoy your summer!

Deborah, the Doggie Diva, lives in Civano with her four beloved dogs. She offers her loving companionship to your pets while you are away as a way to take care of your pets as if they were her own. She has such a deep love for and connection with animals, especially dogs, that she has chosen to leave the corporate world to serve her community through her pet sitting service Doggie Diva Pet Care. She is available to watch your pets and home when you want the freedom to go on a trip for business or pleasure and leave your pets home without worrying about their care and safety. She can be contacted at 490-2221 or [doggiediva@cox.net](mailto:doggiediva@cox.net).