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CANYON VIEW RANCH'S DOG TAILS - SUMMER TIPS

Canyon View Ranch

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DOG TAILS - by Randy Neece and Joe Timko of Canyon View Ranch **Summer Tips for Keeping Canines Cool**

The heat of summer has arrived and that means it's time to remember some important tips for keeping your dog safe and comfortable. We've all heard the warnings about not leaving our dogs in the car while we run into the store, even for a brief time, but there are other important precautions and measures we can take to keep our canines cool. Dogs can't release heat from their bodies

as effectively as people can, and they don't sweat like we do. Instead, they release heat by panting and through the pads of their feet. While those pads are tougher than the soles of our feet, they can still burn, so be aware of the temperature of the asphalt or the ground before you take your buddy for a walk.

Dogs can get sunburn just like people, and the shorter and lighter the coat, the more susceptible they are. Lathering her up with sunscreen will help, but the best protection from excessive sun exposure is to limit the time your dog is outside. Make sure there is enough shade when they are outdoors and that they have plenty of cool water available. A small bowl of water outside can heat up in no time when it's 90 degrees outside, so use a larger bowl and make sure you replenish the water often throughout the day, and add some ice cubes to keep it cool.

If your dog has a long thick coat, consider a summer cut to make him more comfortable. If a haircut is out, then a cooling vest or collar can help keep your dog's body cool without getting him wet. If you are going on a hike, be sure to take along plenty of water and a collapsible water bowl for your dog.

Dogs will often lie around on tile or concrete floors to keep cool rather than on their bedding which may be too hot and uncomfortable for them. Cooling beds, made of a gel-like material, can be a better alternative than a hard floor, especially for senior dogs. You can also take an empty soda bottle, fill it with water and freeze it. Then wrap a towel around the bottle and place it on your dog's bed or favorite spot so she can lie by the bottle and cool off. Whipping up a batch of pupsicles can be a great way for your dog to cool off and enjoy a treat at the same time. Simply add some peanut butter or other flavoring such as beef or chicken bouillon to the water, and then pour into ice cube trays and freeze.

Heatstroke can be deadly to dogs and there is a very small window of time to take action once symptoms start to become obvious. If your dog's gums are pale or if he seems unsteady on his feet, get him to the closest veterinarian immediately. Another way to determine heatstroke is to pinch the skin on his muzzle, and if it doesn't snap back quickly then he's dehydrated and requires medical attention right away. If possible, have someone go with you to the clinic so they can cool your dog down on the way using wet towels. Rubbing alcohol can also be applied to the pads of his feet to help release the heat from his body.

Remember, your dog can't tell you when he's overheated so keep a close eye on him. Take a moment and put yourself in your dog's paws, and make sure you both stay hydrated, safe, and cool.