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Just as the Noel Coward song says only 'mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun'. So please take extra care not to take your pet out in the noon sun when it is at its warmest, after all we can remove our layers but our pets are stuck in their fur coats come rain or shine!

Suntraps

Leaving your pet in either your car, or a specifically designed suntrap such as a conservatory or greenhouse can be potentially life-threatening. It is therefore imperative that pet owners appreciate the threats that suntraps will have on their pet such as dehydration, heat strokes and possibly unconsciousness or death. Therefore the best idea is to avoid leaving your pet in areas such as these altogether. However, if this is not possible a few precautions can be taken to help ensure the health and comfort of your pet.

When it comes to parking the keyword to remember is 'shade'. Parking in a multi-story car park is one obvious solution. Provided that you don't park on the top floor your car will be shaded and will offer a cool environment for your pet. It is also advised that you leave a bowl of cold water in the car to prevent dehydration, and remember not to leave your pet for any longer than absolutely necessary. In addition, if you have air conditioning it is important not to leave this on for the benefit of your pet as occasionally, the engine can actually give off hot air.

Sunburn

Whilst summer is the ideal time to enjoy the great outdoors with your pet it is also important to take a few precautions to ensure the health of your pet this summer. So while you are slapping on the sunscreen don't forget your furry friend needs protection in the hot weather too! This is particularly relevant for albino, white animals and those with white on their faces as the fur is thinner in these areas. The following steps will help reduce the risks:

- *Keep your pet indoors when the sun is at its strongest*
- Use SPF 50 (Sun Protection Factor 50) on vulnerable areas such as the nose and ears (ensuring that it is non toxic to animals in case your pet decides to lick it off!)
- Make sure a shaded area is always available for them to cool down and avoid direct sunlight
- If concerned, contact your veterinary practice, better safe than sorry!

Keep Your Pet Cool

It is important to remember that (just like humans!) some dogs can become uncharacteristically irritable in hot weather. So help cool your dog down by ensuring that he/she has access to a shaded area and a fresh bowl of water (a good idea is to add some ice cubes to the water bowl).

