

**ACCES for Pet Health**

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**4th of July Safety Tips**

**By Beth Guerra, DVM**



Another holiday weekend is upon us! It is important to us at ACCES that you and your entire family celebrate the holiday safely. Read below for some safety tips.

The most obvious concern for this holiday is fireworks. Most pets are intolerant of the loud noise, but your vet can provide a medication to relieve anxiety. If your pet is fearful, there is a chance that s/he may become unusually aggressive. To keep your pet safe and as calm as possible, confine him/her to a quiet room. You may also place the pet in a kennel. Turning on fans or playing music may distract them from the loud noises.

Some dogs view sparklers and other exploding fireworks as toys, and injuries to the face are common as pets try and retrieve them when lit. If possible, confine pets indoors when the show begins. Remember to clean up spent fireworks afterwards, as they contain some chemical residue as well as solid parts that may cause illness if eaten.



Many families may have a cookout to celebrate the 4th. Your pet's stomach can be sensitive to human foods, so try and avoid feeding hot dogs, burgers, or barbeque to your pet. In addition, keep them away from the hot grill to avoid injuries.

Avoid bringing your pet to public fireworks displays because they are very loud, busy and strange to your pet. It is also important to keep pets on a leash if you do take your pet away from home. The July 4th Holiday is one of the busiest weekends for animal shelters because pets often break free in an attempt to escape the chaos. Do not leave your pet unattended outdoors because they could get free even if fenced in or chained. Pets roaming freely may be struck by vehicles or picked up by good Samaritans who mistake them for wandering strays. Make sure your pet has proper identification (tags and collar and microchip) at all times so s/he can be safely returned to you.

This weekend is shaping up to be one of the hottest so far, so be aware of heat exposure during the day. Your pet may not seem stressed, but signs of heatstroke can be subtle. If you and your pets plan to be outdoors for most of the day, remember to keep them in the shade and provide plenty of water. Avoid strenuous activity during the hottest parts of

the day. And never leave a pet in your car, even with the windows open, as temperature can quickly reach 110 degrees Fahrenheit or more. If your pet seems to be panting excessively or is extremely lethargic, bring him/her inside immediately or contact your vet. With a little planning and some extra care, you can make this 4th of July a wonderful celebration for both yourself and your beloved pet.

Posted by **Christina Ryan** at July 3, 2009 12:14 p.m.

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