

PAWPRINTS

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 7

A NEWSLETTER PROVIDED AS A SERVICE FOR OUR VALUED CLIENTS

The Heat Is On To Keep Pets Safe



By Steve Dale

You figure you're only running into the store for 15 minutes. You leave Fido in the car, and, after all, you've cracked open all four windows and it's only 80 degrees outside. It doesn't sound so bad, until you use a thermometer. In 15 minutes, that car heats up to over 115 degrees (according to a Stanford University study ¹).

"Because dogs don't sweat, except for some from their paw pads; they aren't as efficient at cooling off as people and are more susceptible to heat stroke," says Dr. Louise Murray, director of medicine at the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), NY. "I mean normal adult humans wouldn't just



sit and boil in a car, they'd get out. But dogs don't have a choice."

If you see a dog closed up in a hot car, take action. If you can't quickly locate the driver – perhaps by poking into a store a car is parked in front of then consider calling the police. Not

minding your own business may save a life.

Another summertime hazard can be asphalt, which can heat up a good 50 degrees or more compared to the air temperature. "Each year, I treat blistered paws," St. Louis, MO veterinarian Dr. Stephen Brammeier says.

Brammeier adds that on hot days, it's best to take dogs out for long walks very early in the morning or well after sundown. He says it's a good idea to take along a plant mister to spray the dog, as well as drinking water for you and the dog. If you're just outside in your yard, a kiddie pool is great for dogs to wade in.

Cats are prone to summertime hazards as well. Where's Sheriff Andy Taylor when you need him? In most places, if

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Prevention Is Always Best



By Scott Vande Griend, DVM

While I was relaxing one evening, watching a baseball game, my cell phone rang. My wife, Melanie was calling from our neighbor's farm, "We have a problem!" She had volunteered to watch our neighbor's horse, Max, while they were on vacation "Max is sweating and doesn't want to walk!"

I hurried to the farm; I suspected he had foundered, and our equine veterinarian Dr. Scott Greer confirmed the diagnosis – acute laminitis. This condition has been in the news recently, as Barbaro was able to overcome major injury, but not laminitis. This condition can be a death sentence.

Laminitis or foundering is an inflammation of the laminae, or the hoof wall, where it

attaches to the bones of the horse's foot. It is a painful inflammation or inadequate circulation to the hoof wall. The hoof is a strong structure, very much like our fingernails. If you want to imagine how laminitis feels to a horse, - think about smashing your fingernail with a hammer – that throbbing sensation is what the horse is probably feeling, in one or more feet. The only difference, you don't walk on your fingertips, while a horse weighing a thousand pounds or more puts all their weight on the "fingernails" or hooves; you can imagine the agony!

Excessive protein or nutrition (too much grain) in a horse's diet is a very common cause of this condition, so is

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Melanie Vande Griend and Max

Our PAWPRINTS guarantee: Love your pets, and they will love you back.

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¹ McLaren, Null, Quinn. *Heat Stress From Enclosed Vehicles*. *Pediatrics*, Vol. 116 No. 1 July 2005 (Online), pp. e109-e112

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The Heat Is On To Keep Pets Safe (cont'd)

you phone the local sheriff or fire department to fetch a cat up a tree, you'll only hear a bemused operator ask, "You've gotta be kidding?" If you manage to convince emergency personnel to respond, you may be charged a fee.

Be patient. Cats rarely fall from trees. Emergency rooms, however, do treat people who have fallen trying to rescue feline friends. Entice kitty with a can of tuna left at lower branches or at the base of the tree; walk away, and wait for hunger to overcome fear.

Prevention Is Always Best (cont'd)

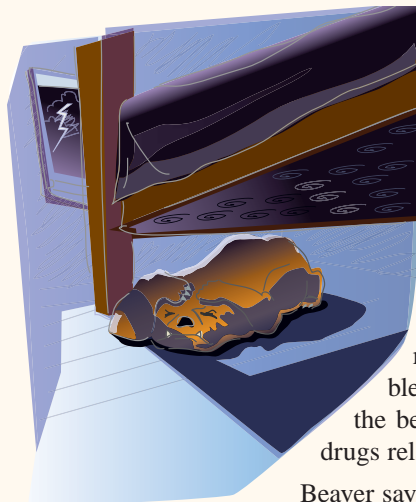
exposure to too lush of pasture growth, excessive exercise, or trauma. Overweight horses are at a higher risk.

With Max, we were lucky and caught the laminitis early. With Dr. Greer's help, we were able to successfully treat it. By that night, Max was much improved, actually taking a few halting steps. And after one more day, he was like a horse of a different color - acting as if nothing had ever happened.

Obviously, prevention is always best. Make sure your horse is not overweight, does not have access to excessive grain and be particularly careful in the spring when the new grass grows fast and lush.

FROM THE AVMA

Don't Ignore Storm Anxiety



It's a very common occurrence—thunder rumbles in the distance and the family dog scrambles under a bed. Dr. Bonnie Beaver, professor of veterinary medicine at Texas A&M University and past president of the American Veterinary Medical Association, says that thunderstorm anxiety can develop into a serious, debilitating problem for many pets.

"I've seen dogs that chewed through concrete walls during thunderstorms," she says. When dealing with a dog with storm anxiety, Beaver, who is a veterinary behaviorist, recommends seeking out the input of a veterinarian as early as possible. "This is a problem that tends to escalate over time." Often, the best treatment available is the use of medications, anti-anxiety drugs related to VALIUM® (Diazepam).

Beaver says that these drugs reduce anxiety and create a "disconnect" in the dog's brain between what is happening, a thunderstorm, and what the dog is experiencing. If the dose is appropriate, she explains, you'll never notice a behavior difference in the dog, and the dog won't notice the storm.

There are few other methods of calming dogs during a storm. For starters, some dogs calm themselves - though agitated, they manage to deal with the storms by finding a "safe" place under a bed or even in the bathtub. Sometimes, corralling the dog into a basement well before a storm, turning up the music, closing the shades and offering a chewie will distract just enough. Clothing can help, for some dogs, "storm caps" or "body wraps," seem to offer security - for reasons unknown. D.A.P. or the dog appeasing pheromone is a perfectly natural means to sooth some dogs.

Before deciding upon your specific approach, consult your veterinarian. For more information, visit www.avma.org, or the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists, www.dacvb.org.