Golden Retriever Rescue Education and Training

GRREAT Beginnings

Spring 2014 Edition | GRREAT Foster Homes | www.GRREAT.org/fosters

Warm Weather Safety Tips for Your Dog

by Kathi Crouse, Point of Contact

With the cold, snowy winter we've had this year, I know it seems like spring is just a dream! But fear not, warm weather will be here before you know it! Warm weather brings its own issues and I'd like to review some of those things that we need to be aware of once spring and summer arrive.

Insect Stings and Spider Bites

The stings of bees, wasps, yellow jackets and bites of ants all cause painful swelling and redness at the site of the sting, usually on the dog's nose or feet, but it can also include the face and neck, even if the dog was not stung on the face. If the dog is stung many times he/she could go into shock as a result of absorbed toxins.

Black Widow and Brown Recluse spider bites are toxic to animals. The first sign is sharp pain at the site of the bite and later the dog develops intense excitability, fever, weakness and muscle and joint pains. Seizures, shock and death can occur, especially with the bite of the Black Widow Spider.

Treatment for Stings and Bites include:

- Identify the insect.
- If the stinger from a bee is found (a small black sac), remove it by scraping it out with your fingernail or a credit card. Do not squeeze or use tweezers as it can inject more venom.
- Make a paste of baking soda and water and apply it directly to the sting.
- Apply an ice pack to relieve pain and swelling.
- Apply calamine lotion to relieve itching, use a Comfy Cone to make sure the dog can't lick it off.
- Benadryl – typical dosage is 0.5 - 2mg per 1 lb. of body weight, check with your GRREAT vet for the appropriate dosage for your dog. *It's a good idea to keep Benadryl in your pet first aid kit, it's an important aid in treating stings and bites.*

Bee stings in dogs should not be ignored. If your dog is having a severe allergic reaction seek immediate veterinary attention!

Toxic plants and Mulch

Plants may be pretty but not necessarily pet friendly. Some of the more toxic plants to dogs include Azaleas and Rhododendrons, Tulips and Daffodils and Sago Palms. All of these plants can cause vomiting, diarrhea, serious stomach problems, convulsions and potentially even death.

Cocoa bean mulch used in gardens is highly toxic to dogs – so toxic it can be fatal, in fact.

Cocoa bean mulch can be purchased at most garden centers. It's known for having a fine texture and sweet smell. The smell, sometimes compared to a chocolate Pop Tart, could be what appeals to some dogs. The mulch is made from the shells of cocoa beans. The shells contain two chemical compounds called methylxanthines that are also found in chocolate: theobromine and caffeine. Both of these stimulant ingredients are toxic to dogs.

Symptoms of cocoa bean mulch ingestion in dogs include:

- Vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain
- Rapid heart rate
- Muscle tremors
- Seizures
- Death

The best way to keep your dog safe from plants and mulch is to keep them away from them!

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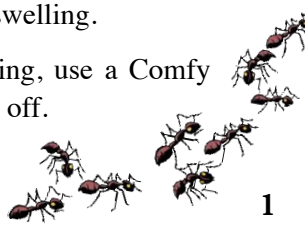

Warm Weather Safety

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Poison Ivy

Poison Ivy and plants like it transmit harmful chemicals through oils on their leaves by way of direct contact with skin. Because dogs have fur that protects their skin, it is uncommon for them to be negatively affected by contact with Poison Ivy. But they can easily pass the oils, which adhere to their coats, on to people. Areas on your dog that have less fur, such as his snout and groin can become red, swollen, itchy and irritated. If your dog is showing signs of having come into contact with poison ivy, follow these steps to relieve symptoms and prevent the oils from spreading.

- ✳ Protect yourself – wear long sleeves, long pants and gloves before touching your dog
- ✳ Dishwashing Soap – this works best for removing poison ivy oils as it is made to clean grease
- ✳ Wash your dog with the dishwashing soap, making sure you pour enough on to fully lather his/her body and allow the soap to stand for up to 10 minutes, then rinse.
- ✳ Repeat the washing/rinsing procedure again as poison ivy oils are difficult to get rid of.
- ✳ Dry your dog with a clean towel and then wash any towels you used, along with the clothes and gloves you wore while handling the dog prior to and during its bath.
- ✳ Give your dog Benadryl to help reduce swelling and other symptoms
- ✳ Apply Calamine Lotion to affected areas

Prevent further exposure to Poison Ivy by removing any plants in your yard.

If by some chance your dog has ingested Poison Ivy leaves, take him/her to a veterinarian immediately.

Some other warm weather hazards include:

- ✳ Blue-green algae in ponds
- ✳ Citronella Candles
- ✳ Compost Piles
- ✳ Fertilizers
- ✳ Flea Products
- ✳ Swimming pool treatment supplies
- ✳ Fly baits containing methomyl
- ✳ Slug and snail baits containing metaldehyde

By being aware of what's in our homes, yards and surrounding areas, we can help keep our foster dogs, as well as our own pets, safe from warm weather hazards.

Reminders!

★ Unless your foster dog has come to you from boarding at a GRREAT vet, please remember he/she needs to be taken to a GRREAT vet soon after arriving to your home! Even if your foster comes with medical records and is current on all shots, at a minimum, your foster dog still needs a physical exam and heartworm test!

★ GRREAT foster dogs are never permitted off-leash, except in a securely fenced area!

★ Even if your foster dog comes to you microchipped by a previous owner or shelter, you still need to have your GRREAT vet or a GRREAT microchipper scan and verify the microchip number, so we can get the microchip re-registered to GRREAT.

Fostering an Orthopedic Dog: It's Not as Hard as You Think!

by Jessie Pickard, Adoption Coordinator

GRREAT is often in need of foster homes that can take on a dog with orthopedic issues and unfortunately, there are only a handful that will say "Yes!"

It's actually not as hard as you think; it just takes a little preparation and some extra effort. Opening your home to a dog that truly needs extra help, getting them through it, and finding them their Forever Home, is AWESOME!

So, what does it take?

✶Cover slippery floors – the worst thing that can happen to a dog with ortho issues is to slip, twist, or fall. TRUTH: ANY dog can tear a cruciate ligament or dislocate a shoulder or hip, it's just more likely when they already have an orthopedic issue.

- ✶ Prepare an area for the dog to spend recovery time. Not every ortho dog will need corrective surgery but for those that do, they will need to be confined for an average of 3-6 weeks. You can use a large crate or an x-pen. The dog will only be allowed out for potty breaks and should always be on leash AND sling until off crate rest.
- ✶ Therapy. Once the dog is released from strict crate rest, the BEST therapy available is swimming or Underwater Treadmill. The water provides resistance while fully supporting the joints. There are several places to go, and it will take some travel and appointment time. However, although water therapy is the best, slow on-leash walks are the second best, and you can still foster an ortho dog even if you can't take him to swim therapy.
- ✶ The three most important things you can do for an ortho dog are 1) keep their weight down, 2) keep them well exercised, so that their muscles stay strong to support their joints 3) Glucosamine, Glucosamine, Glucosamine!

We have a few foster homes that regularly foster ortho dogs and they can talk with you about the detailed ins-and-outs.

I can tell you from personal experience, there's nothing like keeping a needy dog safe, actively working with them through recovery, cheering-on the progress they make, and then finding them their Forever Home – its one of the most rewarding things you'll ever do! If you don't believe me, check out Bubby's description on the web: http://www.grreat.org/dogs/bubby-13-032/

BEFORE

http://youtu.be/Q4bhyOVJ9rM

AFTER

http://youtu.be/Q5CgyVbg7Mo

What you can do to Help Your GRREAT Vet Get Paid Promptly

by Lucinda Twining, Medical Coordinator

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