



## The Factsheet Series [www.secondhopecircle.org](http://www.secondhopecircle.org)

### Keeping Cool in the Summer!

#### **Ideas for keeping pets cool in the blistering heat and humidity of summer.**

As I write this article it's 40°C outside (plus humidity)! It is so important to keep pets cool in such extreme heat conditions! Yet sometimes it can be hard to figure out the best ways of keeping your pets cool in the summer (and not just dogs and cats but small animals too). Below I've listed some ideas that I've tried. Try and also keep in mind that if you're feeling hot, imagine what your pet is feeling in that fur coat!

Check out the following articles for more information on keeping cool and why keeping them cool is so important!

[http://today.msnbc.msn.com/id/14152427/ns/today-today\\_pets\\_and\\_animals/t/keep-your-pet-cool-during-dog-days-summer/](http://today.msnbc.msn.com/id/14152427/ns/today-today_pets_and_animals/t/keep-your-pet-cool-during-dog-days-summer/)

<http://www.wikihow.com/Cool-Your-Cat-Down-in-the-Summer>

<http://www.dogbreedinfo.com/heat.htm>

<http://www.examiner.com/pets-in-st-louis/pet-cooling-kits-cool-bandannas-swimming-pools-ideas-to-keep-your-pet-safe-and-cool>

-> Please note that activities involving swimming should always be supervised!  
It's a sad fact that animals and children left unattended can drown; please don't let this happen to your pet!

### **Water, water and more water!**

Always have water available to your pets (and not just the toilet!) Keep water bowls in accessible locations and try and change out the water as frequently as possible. This is important for every type of pet. Adding ice cubes is a bonus; it will keep the water cooler for longer. I'll also add here that my dog Cody loves ice cubes (he even demands them in winter!)

Another way to use water is to 'hose down' your pets. If you have access to a lake that's great. You can also purchase a small kiddie pool from the dollar store or use a hose (on a light setting) to allow pets to cool off. Sprinklers also work well and a lot of dogs love this!

### **Shade and shelter.**

Shade and shelter should always be accessible to animals. Keep pets indoors whenever possible (with air conditioning or fans) and always provide them with outdoor housing and shade if not. Monitor animals kept outside throughout the day, because the shady spots will change depending on what

time of day it is. Do not leave pets in hot cars! You may not realize how hot it gets inside a car, but believe me it's hotter than the outside temperatures!

### **Fur Coats.**

Do you have a very furry pet? Keeping pets groomed frequently can insure that excess and unnecessary fur (built up from the winter months) is not adding to the heat problem. It doesn't take very long (set aside 10 minutes a day) and it can make your pet more comfortable!

A nice way to cool a rabbit down is to use cool-room temp water and wet their fur at the back of the neck. The fur is generally shorter here and the water can cool down the skin more easily. It's difficult to ensure that small animals are hydrated so it's a useful trick and would probably work for ferrets and guinea pigs too.

### **Ice.**

I've already mentioned adding ice to water bowls (you can also add small ice cubes to water bottles that small animals drink from). Another interesting way to give your pets a cooling treat is to freeze chicken or vegetable broth in ice cube trays. Generally for dogs (maybe a cat might enjoy this?) it's a fun and yummy way for them to cool down. You can also fill a sock with ice cubes or an ice pack and place it where your kitty likes to sleep the most.

### **Game for rats.**

While perhaps not very applicable to other small animals this game is great for rats. It's called 'fishing for peas'. Find a small tub and fill it with an inch or two of water. Place a stone or other object in the tub (this will ensure rats have something to grip onto to get out. Make sure there is access both in and out. Then take some frozen peas and blueberries and put them in the water. Rats can sit and fish with their hands to get the yummy treats. More adventurous rats may even wade into the water. This can also be done in a bathtub. I'd also like to add that this game is for supervised play always watch rats and make sure they are okay.

### **Exercise.**

While we all know that exercise is important for our pets, it's okay to take it easy when it's this hot out! Try and keep exercising to a minimum or indoors. If you take your dog out for a run, try and do it in the early morning and maybe limit it to a light jog. Our dog Cody loves to chase a laser pointer. Luckily this activity happens at night when it's cooler, and we also try and do a shorter number of passes back and forth.

### **Cooling products.**

Want to be prepared for the hot days to come? There are products out there that can help keep pets cool.

One is a pet-cooling mat. Great for dogs and cats it comes in different sizes and helps cool pets down. Example: <http://www.nextag.com/dog-cooling-mat/compare-html>

Drinking fountain. Especially well received by cats, drinking fountains keep water cooler and debris free. They require an electrical outlet and you need to re-fill and clean the fountains (they come with a filter).

<http://www.nextag.com/cat-fountain/compare-html>

If you're going to the beach or the lake (and ensuring there will be shady places to hang out) why not bring a floating dog toy for your dog? I can't say my dog really loves floating dog toys but then again he doesn't really like putting his face in the water. Retrieving and water loving dogs will probably enjoy this the most! <http://www.petacular.com/amphibious-floating-dog-toys-1049-prd1.html>

Accessories. Want to keep your dog in style while staying cool? Cooling bandanas are another option for fashion and health conscious pet owners!

<http://www.nextag.com/cooling-bandana/compare-html>

Sunscreen. Pets can get sunburned?! Why yes they can! White dogs and dogs with short fur can get sunburned (especially on the nose) so apply a pet sunscreen if they're going to be out in the sun.

<http://www.nextag.com/pet-sunscreen/stores-html>

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