

Area Vet Talks Dog Safety

Written by Adam Hicks
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The seasons are changing and many High Country residents will begin taking their furry friends out to play. According to Dr. Sarah Minis with the Animal Emergency Clinic in Boone, traveling with dogs can be perfectly safe as long as the owner takes the proper precautionary measures.

Minis said dogs are especially prone to overheating for several reasons. First, dogs have an obvious coat of hair, which raises their body temperatures. Second, humans are able to sweat and when the sweat evaporates, it cools the body. A dog's bodily functions do not allow them to sweat. Finally, a dog's body temperature runs from 100 degrees to 102.5 degrees, which is already a several degrees warmer than a human's.

Minis said dogs also take longer to get acclimated to weather change.

Minis said most dogs will act almost completely normal even if they are on the verge of heat stroke, but there are a few telltale signs to keep you on. Minis said, "Watch for things like heavy, heavy panting, the tongue getting really big and hanging out, and the dog starting to act a little lethargic. Those are cues that you need to stop, let them drink some water until they're not panting as heavily and then they're probably ready to keep going."

Minis also said it's never a good idea to leave your dog alone in your parked vehicle. If you

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have to, Minis said you should be sure to park in the shade, crack your windows so a breeze can blow through, leave a bowl of cool water in the vehicle, and check on the dog every 10 minutes or so.