



At our clinic, every pet gets the X-Care treatment. This is a highly effective examination and follow-up process, tailored to the changing needs of a pet at the different stages in their life, and ensures every pet receives the highest standard of health care.

“Summer challenges for our pet”

Each season brings its own challenges for our pets. In Summer the two most important seasonal issues are fleas and sunburn. We're all terribly aware of the effect of our pets' fleas because we see them scratching - and they often share them with us. The effects of the sun on pets are less obvious. All pets are susceptible to damage from the sun - especially since cats in particular love to spend hours asleep in full sunlight. Pale skin cats, and the exposed areas like noses on dogs are all prone to the effects of the sun and careful management to prevent injury and control any problems that do arise is very important.

The stories below will provide some useful information on these issues along with some important tips on caring for your pets over the summer holiday season.



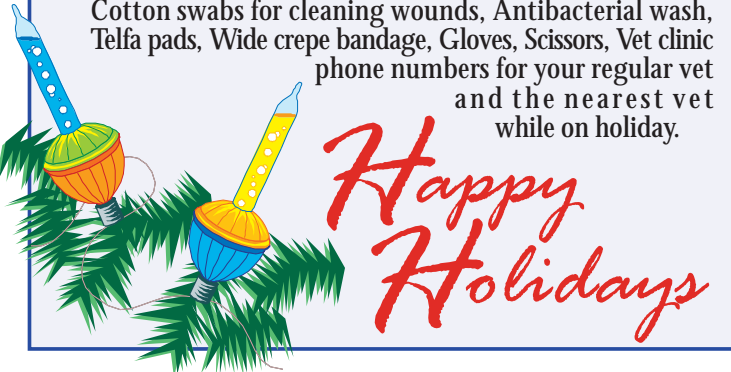
X-Care Summer holiday travelling tips

The Christmas holidays are upon us and this often means leaving our beloved pets behind in a kennel or cattery or in the care of a pet feeder or neighbour. If your pet is really part of the family, a growing range of accommodation facilities permits you to take your pet with you.

Some tips for travelling with your pet by car:

- X It is safer for you and your pet if he or she is confined to a cage or crate while en-route. A boot separation device is better for all concerned.
- X Make sure you secure carriers with a seat belt or bungee cord.
- X Do not allow dogs to hang out the window - it's dangerous and may cause head, neck and eye injuries as well as airborne infections.
- X For dogs, make pit stops at least every two hours for exercise.
- X Give only half normal food in the morning and feed the remainder when you reach your destination.
- X Carry fresh cold water and a drinking bowl.
- X Do not leave your pet in a hot vehicle. Remember, shade moves.
- X Keep your leash handy and use care when opening doors in heavy traffic areas.
- X Be aware of your dog's behaviour when left alone - barking and whining cause stress both to the animal and passers by.
- X If the weather is warm use your vehicle's air conditioning. Always make sure that air is being circulated frequently.
- X Pack a sturdy leash and well fitted collar with identification tag carrying your phone number.
- X Pack waste removal bags and a litter tray and litter for cats.
- X Pack some of your pet's bedding and favourite toys.
- X Pack a Pet First Aid kit, which you can purchase from your local vet. It should contain at least:

Tweezers for removing foreign objects from fur or paws, Cotton swabs for cleaning wounds, Antibacterial wash, Telfa pads, Wide crepe bandage, Gloves, Scissors, Vet clinic phone numbers for your regular vet and the nearest vet while on holiday.



X-Care Itchy skin - a common problem in dogs

The common cause of itchiness in the dog is allergic dermatitis. This is a reaction to environmental allergens such as pollens, house dust mites and plants. Typically dogs will rub their faces, have itchy ears, lick or chew their feet and paws, scratch their armpits, groin, and sometimes their bottom (scooting). Secondary infections can make the itch worse.



Often itchy skin cannot be cured and may be present for the majority of the dog's life. We need to manage the itch to an acceptable level - this may involve a variety of treatment options -

Talk to your veterinarian for the best options for managing your itchy dog

X **Flea Control.** This cannot be over emphasised! Itchy dogs have a lower "itch threshold" than normal dogs. We strongly recommend regular flea control.

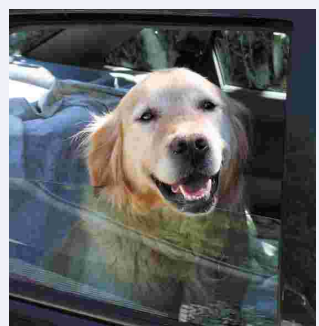
X **Essential Fatty Acids.** Can be useful in up to 40% of cases. Can be added to your dog's current diet, or purchased already added in premium diets recommended by your vet. No side effects.

X **Shampoos.** Help reduce itchiness, reduce dandruff and moisturises - helps reduce secondary infections.



Shampooing is one of the many options recommended for managing your itchy dog

X-Care Summer heat stress



Don't leave your pet unattended in your vehicle. Remember, shade moves.

Every year in New Zealand dogs die from heatstroke after being left unattended in cars. Car interiors can get to extreme heats in a very short space of time, particularly if left in direct sunlight on hot summer days. Even when the windows are left open, there may be very little air movement, and there have been incidents of deaths in small dogs that cannot reach up to the car windows, even with the windows open and a drink left for them.

Heatstroke occurs when the pet's body temperature reaches between 41 and 43 degrees Celsius. At high temperatures, the cells in the vital organs, including the heart, kidneys, liver and brain start to die, leading to organ damage and eventually failure. Heatstroke has also been reported after excessive exercise, and when dogs and cats have been left confined in both indoor and outdoor situations. Don't leave pets in the car, and ensure they have shade, good ventilation and a drink if left anywhere on hot days.

X **Topical Ointments.** Includes topical steroid creams, useful to control flare-ups.

X **Antibiotics.** Commonly prescribed for the "secondary infections", often needs to be given for many weeks.

X **Antihistamines.** Many types available. May help reduce the itch and the amount of steroids used. Side effects are mild sedation in some dogs.

X **Corticosteroids.** These are effective in most cases, but can produce side effects such as increased thirst/appetite. Side effects are more serious with long-term use.

X **Immunotherapy.** Done by a Veterinary Dermatologist (as with human allergies). He will reassess the dog and possibly "patch test" with suspected allergens and check for a skin reaction. Once allergens are identified the Dermatologist makes a "vaccine" injection, which is given at regular intervals. As the signs of the disease resolves, the interval between injections is increased.

Your veterinarian will be able to tailor the best options for your itchy dog.

X-Care

Skin cancer in pets

Just as New Zealanders are getting skin cancer more, so are our pets.

Skin cancer mainly affects white or pale skinned pets, especially on the tips of their ears, on the nose and the eyelids. Some dogs can also be affected in their groin.

Most animals get a type of skin cancer called a squamous cell carcinoma (SCC) not melanomas, like humans do. However, SCC is just as aggressive and nasty. It causes the skin to be eaten away, so that the affected area of skin becomes an ugly, bleeding sore that just gets bigger and bigger.

Liquid nitrogen treatment can be used in the early stages, but if it is advanced then surgery is the only effective form of treatment.

Prevention is obviously difficult in animals as they cannot wear hats, sunglasses or t-shirts. However, sun-block, specifically made for pets, can be effective if used. Also keeping your pet out of the worst of the heat of the day is important, especially if they are a sun-lover.



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