

Cool canines

Thinking of taking your pup on a rural escape? *This Morning* resident vet Dr Scott Miller reveals what dog owners should be aware of. *Words: Anna Evdokimou*

When the weather forecasts blue skies and sunshine, there's nothing better than getting outside and making the most of the rays — with your pooches in tow. But dogs in the UK are not as adapted to the warmer weather as we think, and there are some things to be mindful of when venturing to pastures that allow for increased physical activity. Resident Vet on ITV's *This Morning*, Dr Scott Miller, has the lowdown.

HEATSTROKE

"It's important to bring a bottle of water along with you on walks," explains Dr Miller, who also works at Barking Heads vet in southwest London. "If you groom your dog, get ahead of the warm weather and ensure you cut their fur extra short."

If your dog is still struggling in the heat, Dr Miller recommends making use of the environment around you. "One of the benefits of being in the countryside is that there's usually a water source nearby," he explains. "Don't fully submerge your dog in water if they're overheating, as this

can lead to shock. Similarly, don't force them to drink, as dogs release heat through panting, so you need to let them breathe."

Instead, simply stand them there. This will help cool them down and regulate their breathing. If you can't find a water source, find a shady area and let your pet pant it out. When you get home, wipe your dog down with a damp cloth to allow for evaporative cooling.

BUGS AND BITES

The countryside is full of streams and brooks, and while this is perfect if your four-legged friend is a keen swimmer, it can also be a hotbed for bugs and fleas. "If your dog is going to swim, it's best to use an oral flea tablet rather than a topical liquid, which can be given monthly," says Dr Miller.

There's an abundance of oral insecticides to choose from, so it's best to talk to your vet and they can guide you towards the most appropriate choice for your dog. If you don't have time to apply a topical liquid, you can opt for a flea collar instead.



DR SCOTT MILLER AND FRIEND

TICKS

The UK climate during summer is the perfect environment for ticks. These critters carry several diseases, including Lyme Disease, which can be exhausting for dogs. In addition to preventative medication, Dr Miller recommends wiping down your dog after a walk with a damp towel and checking their ears, axillary, tail and between their toes.

SUNBURN

According to Dr Miller, dogs that have pale skin or a thin coat can get burnt by the sun just as much as we can. Suncream is a great idea, but it's highly important that you only use formulas that are specifically for dogs, as some chemicals in human suncream can be toxic to animals. When applying the dog-safe suncream, be sure to cover the spots most exposed to sunshine, such as the bridge of the nose and stomach.

GRASS SEEDS

A nuisance to both a dog and their owner, grass seeds are an arrow-shaped thorn that can attach to the fur of your dog and tend to wiggle into the skin. Once they've punctured, it can be both difficult and painful to get them out.

"After a walk, be sure to check your dog's ears, axillary, tail and around the face," says Dr. Scott. "This quick exam will save your dog from a lot of discomfort and you from a lot of stress."

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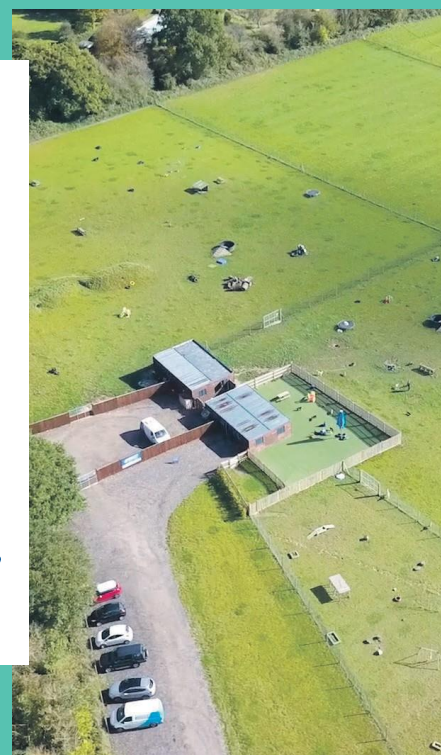
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