

# The DPH Bulletin

From the Delaware Division of Public Health

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## Keep pets safe during summer months



As summer heat intensifies, the Division of Public Health's (DPH) Office of Animal Welfare (OAW) asks pet owners to follow these pet safety tips from the American Veterinary Medical Association:

- Walk your pet in the early morning or late evening to prevent burns from hot asphalt and sidewalks.
- It's best to leave pets at home during 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebrations. Fireworks, strange places, and crowds can spook animals and cause them to flee.
- Prevent illness in pets by keeping sparklers, glow sticks, fireworks, charcoal, and skewers out of reach. Keep trash cans covered and ask guests not to feed pets.
- For pets fearful of fireworks, thunder, or other loud noises, try "thunder" shirts or behavioral training to keep pets calm. If those don't work, ask your veterinarian if your pet can benefit from medication.
- Pets are safest inside on hot and humid days. If pets must be outside, ensure they have access to fresh water and shade. Know the symptoms of overheating in pets, which can include excessive panting, drooling, or collapse. Seek medical attention immediately if your dog is having any of these symptoms. Under [Delaware law](#), dogs cannot be left outdoors during hazardous weather warnings issued by the National Weather Service.
- Never leave pets inside parked cars. Temperatures can rise quickly and become life threatening. To report a dog locked in a car, call 302-255-4646.
- Make sure your pet is vaccinated against rabies to protect your pet and your family.
- Pets should always wear I.D. tags with owner contact information and a current license. Have your pets microchipped and registered so they can be reunited with you if they are ever lost. If your pet is missing, visit OAW's Lost & Found Pet Registry, [animalservices.delaware.gov](http://animalservices.delaware.gov).

## Protect your skin from the sun and indoor tanning to prevent skin cancer

Be sun wise all the time, not only when heading to the beach. Ultraviolet (UVA and UVB) radiation from the sun and indoor tanning is dangerous because it damages the epidermis, the skin's top layer. Long-term sun exposure, sunbathing, using indoor tanning, and having sunburns all increase the chance of developing skin cancer, according to the Delaware Cancer Consortium (DCC). Sun exposure also causes premature aging, wrinkles, age spots, and uneven skin tone.

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. Protect skin from damaging and dangerous ultraviolet radiation year-round. Stay indoors or in the shade between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. when the sun is most intense. Wear water-resistant, broad-spectrum sunscreen with a Sun Protection

Factor (SPF) of 15 or higher, wide-brimmed hats, and sunglasses that block 99 percent or more of UV light. Makeup and lip balm should have an SPF of 15 or more.

Protect children from exposure to the sun.



Skin cancer types range from basal and squamous cell to melanoma. The DCC describes Malignant Melanoma as the most serious and deadly skin cancer. About 31 Delawareans die of melanoma annually, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Delaware ranked third in the U.S. for malignant melanoma incidence in the period 2010 to 2014.

In its report, *Cancer Incidence and Mortality in Delaware, 2010-2014*, DPH provides a list of risk factors for melanoma: sun exposure, having light skin, a history of sunburns before 20 years of age, and using tanning beds and sun lamps. High-risk individuals should have their skin thoroughly examined by a health care professional and do a monthly self-examination.

For more information about skin cancer, visit <https://www.healthylodelaware.org/Individuals/Cancer/Skin>.



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