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Swimming Safety for Pets: Make a Safe Splash This Summer

Warm weather weekends at the beach, lake or pool make as big a splash with Pets as with the rest of the family. But before diving in, Banfield, The Pet Hospital offers a few poolside precautions to help every doggie paddler in the family get a head start on swimming season.

Banfield's database of Pet health records indicates swimming pools can be even more dangerous for Pets than rivers or lakes. Drowning could occur if Pets jump or fall into the pool and don't know how to climb back out. Follow these swimming safety tips to keep your Pets in the swim all summer long.

- Never leave Pets unattended around a pool.
- Fence your pool with a secure gate, and never leave your Pet inside the fenced pool area unsupervised.
- Make sure Pets can get out of the pool. If dogs jumps or fall in and don't know how to get out without help, they may panic and drown.
- Not all Pets are excellent swimmers, so if water is a big part of your family life, introduce Pets to water gradually.
- On boats, make sure Pets wear flotation devices (available at most boating stores), and consult your veterinarian if you think your Pet needs seasickness medication.
- Try not to let Pets drink pool water. Chlorine and chemicals used to keep pools free of algae and contaminants can cause Pet health problems, such as dry mouth or gastric distress.
- Try not to let Pets drink pond, puddle or lake water, which is a common source of the Giardia parasite. Giardia is not life threatening to healthy Pets, but it causes diarrhea and can be passed to the whole family. It's hard to stop Pets from drinking water in the outdoors, so make sure your Pets are up-to-date with Giardia vaccinations.
- Don't allow Pets to wander river and lake shores alone, where they may find and eat dead fish (smelly, but tasty!), or other debris. If eaten, your Pet may develop serious stomach or intestinal upset.

Ever heard of "The Swimming Cat?"

Think all cats hate water? Not so. One breed that needs a kitty pool is the Turkish Van. Known as "The Swimming Cat," Turkish Vans have a water-resistant white coat with some coloring on the head and tail. They love to drink from the sink tap, dunk their toys in their water dishes, play in the bathtub and swim. That's one more reason to enclose your family pool behind a secure gate and keep all Pets safe this summer — even swimming cats!

