Calling all cat owners
If you’d rather avoid a trip to one of our out-of-hours pet emergency clinics or 24/7 hospitals this summer then beware of these 13 summer dangers that could make your cat ill

OUT AND ABOUT

1. Hot Weather
Danger: Cats can suffer from dehydration and heat exhaustion as well as heatstroke, which can be fatal and is a frequent cause of death in cats in mid-summer. They are particularly susceptible to the effects of hot weather if they have underlying health problems, have a thick coat, are elderly or, if pregnant, carry a litter of kittens.
How to avoid: Keep cats cool by turning on a fan, providing cool drinking water and creating shaded retreat indoors and outdoors.

2. Blue-Green Algae
Danger: This dangerous type of algae can grow on the surface of water, particularly in still ponds and can also grow in tap water. It is extremely toxic to pets and can cause liver failure and death.
How to avoid: Avoid exposing pets to shallow water that may contain blue-green algae as the bacteria are toxic and can cause liver failure and death.

3. Toads
Danger: Toads can contain dangerous toxins called bufadienolides which can cause liver failure and death.
How to avoid: Keep a close eye on potential water sources for your cat as there may be toads living in them.

4. Fish Hooks
Danger: Fish hooks are often discarded by inconsiderate fishermen so be on your guard as your cat may require urgent emergency treatment.
How to avoid: Monitor your cat carefully and if you suspect a change in behaviour seek advice from your vet or, out of hours, contact your nearest Vets Now pet emergency clinic or Vets Now 24/7 hospital.

IN THE HOME

5. Open Windows
Danger: It’s easy for cats to jump out of open windows, especially if there is an attractive view outside. They can also be a significant risk if they fall out of high-rise flats or even two-storey houses.
How to avoid: Keep upstairs windows closed, you could try using netting or a screen or installing window locks if you live in a high-rise flat or even a two-storey house.

6. Antihistamines
Danger: Many pets can develop a sensitivity to antihistamines as a result of seeking out tasty treats that have been left within their reach.
How to avoid: Always keep drugs and medicines well out of reach. If the label states the product is toxic to cats, store it carefully.

IN THE GARDEN

7. Luminous Necklaces
Danger: Plastic forms of this product are extremely attractive to cats. If swallowed, the liquid inside can cause drooling, vomiting and stomach pain.
How to avoid: Keep well out of reach and carefully dispose of any you’ve used.

8. Flowers and Plants
Danger: Some plants are highly attractive to cats. If swallowed, the liquid inside can cause drooling, vomiting and stomach pain.
How to avoid: Read up on which plants are toxic and avoid buying those listed as dangerous.

9. Slug and Snail Pellets
Danger: Many of these products are extremely dangerous for pets. They contain luminescent chemicals which are toxic to cats if ingested.
How to avoid: Avoid any products containing a substance called metaldehyde and scatter any pellets you do use sporadically.

10. Grass Blades
Danger: Grass blades can get stuck in your cat’s nose or throat. They can also cause breathing problems, sneezing and nasal discharge if swallowed.
How to avoid: If the label states the product is toxic to cats, store it carefully.

11. Flea Products
Danger: Cats are often tempted to swallow any tasty bait from nets and baits that are attractive to cats. If swallowed, the liquid inside can cause drooling, vomiting and stomach pain.
How to avoid: Read the label carefully and avoid using products that are toxic to cats.

12. Engine Coolant
Danger: Engine coolants can contain propylene glycol instead.
How to avoid: Keep well out of reach and immediately, or better still, use a pet-friendly product containing ethylene glycol.

13. Rat Poison, Weed Killer and Ant Powder
Danger: Many pets are tempted to eat this toxic bait. If swallowed, the liquid inside can cause drooling, vomiting and stomach pain.
How to avoid: Keep well out of reach and carefully dispose of any you’ve used.

COMMON POISONS

Risk rating: 5/5
Likelihood: 4/5

RISK RATINGS EXPLAINED
1. Foods
2. Household or spot-on dog flea products containing permethrin can be deadly for cats. Read the label carefully and avoid using products that are toxic to cats.
3. Rat Poison, Weed Killer and Ant Powder can cause drooling, vomiting and stomach pain. If swallowed, the liquid inside can cause drooling, vomiting and stomach pain.
4. Engine Coolant can contain propylene glycol instead.
5. Slug and Snail Pellets can contain luminescent chemicals which are toxic to cats if ingested.
6. Antihistamines can be lethal if not treated immediately.
7. Grass blades can get stuck in your cat’s nose or throat. They can also cause breathing problems, sneezing and nasal discharge if swallowed.
8. Flowers and Plants can contain dangerous toxins called bufadienolides which can cause liver failure and death.
9. Toads can contain dangerous toxins called bufadienolides which can cause liver failure and death.
10. Hot Weather can cause dehydration and heat exhaustion as well as heatstroke, which can be fatal and is a frequent cause of death in cats in mid-summer.
11. Fish Hooks can cause drooling, vomiting and stomach pain.
12. Antihistamines can cause drooling, vomiting and stomach pain.
13. Engine Coolant can cause drooling, vomiting and stomach pain.

WHY DO SOME CATS EAT ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING?
1. They are curious about the world and want to explore.
2. They are hungry.
3. They may have an upset digestive system.
4. They may eat or drink things to induce vomiting.
5. They may have a food addiction.
6. They may crave the taste of something sweet.
7. They may have eaten something that was toxic or deadly.
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