



## Prepare pets for Fourth of July festivities

Many people are eager for Independence Day celebrations in early summer. There is much to be excited about, as festivities often begin in the afternoon with barbecues and pool parties and commence late at night after fireworks shows that light up the night sky. Still, not everyone enjoys the extra noise and busy nature of July 4th parties, particularly furry members of the family.

Animal control services often report an increase in lost animals between July 4th and July 6th. That's because the excitement of the holiday puts pets out of their comfort zones. While pet owners need not cancel their July 4th plans, they should take heed of the many ways to keep their pets safe during the festivities.

### Update identification

Be sure prior to any July 4th events that pets are wearing collars with current identification information. If an address or phone number has changed since the last time you updated microchip records, be sure to check the account is current.

### Be careful with alcoholic drinks

Party hosts typically serve beer, wine and cocktails. Alcoholic beverages have the potential to poison pets, says the ASPCA. Animals can become very intoxicated, severely depressed or go into comas if they drink alcohol. Keep spirited drinks well out of reach.

### Check with the vet

Many pets are prone to anxiety from loud noises, such as thunderstorms and fireworks,

and lots of commotion — something that occurs in spades come July 4th. Some veterinarians recommend a small course of anti-anxiety medication or a sedative to help pets cope with the stimuli.

### Create a quiet space

Allow pets to ride out the day in their comfortable, quiet and cozy retreats. If necessary, create a space in an interior room. Cover the pet crate with a blanket and offer favorite toys or bedding to create a soothing environment.

### Place notes on doors and gates

While it's best to keep pets in a locked room away from the fray, some pets like to socialize with guests and are not bothered by noises. However, alert guests with notes posted on doors and fence gates to check to make sure pets are not trying to escape behind them. All doors should be closed firmly when entering or exiting.

### Pick up debris

Firework debris can rain down on properties even if you were not shooting off the fireworks. Curious pets may pick it up or eat it, which runs the risk of an upset stomach or even an intestinal blockage. Check your yard before letting pets out to play.

### Keep an eye on the grill

Pets can be opportunists and those burgers and chicken drumsticks smell delicious to pets. Pets that get too close to the grill can become injured. And if pets eat leftovers, they may end up with digestive distress or even be poisoned by foods that are toxic to cats and dogs.

Pets need to be protected during summertime parties like Independence Day celebrations.

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## Hydrating is Key in Summer Heat

Summer is a season to enjoy some fun in the sun, but it's imperative that people remember to take steps to reduce their risk for heat illness. Those measures should include efforts to hydrate and remain hydrated throughout the day. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that water will almost always help people remain hydrated even when they're working in the heat. But food also plays a vital role in preventing heat illness, as the CDC notes eating regular meals can help to replace the salt lost through sweat. It's also important that individuals avoid energy drinks and alcohol when spending time in the hot summer sun. Many energy drinks contain more caffeine than standard servings of coffee, tea and soft drinks, and excessive caffeine consumption can contribute to dehydration. The same can be said for alcohol and the CDC reports that consuming alcohol within 24 hours of working in the heat can increase the risk of heat illness.



## Engaging Hobbies for Seniors

The value of hobbies is undeniable. A 2014 study published in the Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology found that employees who engaged in creative hobbies outside of work were more creative on work projects and had a better attitude on the job, while a separate study published in Psychosomatic Medicine in 2009 reported that individuals who engaged in enjoyable leisure activities had lower blood pressure and a smaller waist circumference.



The myriad benefits of hobbies is good news for seniors, many of whom have ample time for leisure activities. Whether seniors are retired or still working but free from the responsibilities of parenting, the following are some fun and engaging hobbies to fill that free time.

- **Cooking:** Years spent hustling and bustling through the daily grind of personal and professional obligations might have forced individuals to embrace cooking that emphasized convenience over culinary skill. Now that there's more time to embrace one's inner Emeril, seniors can look to cooking classes or take the self-taught route and purchase a new cookbook filled with delicious recipes. A well-cooked homemade meal can provide a sense of accomplishment and affords seniors an opportunity to control the ingredients in the foods they eat, which can be important for individuals with health-related dietary restrictions.
- **Writing:** Many successful individuals have penned their memoirs after long, notable careers and lives. While individuals needn't follow suit with the goal of making their memoirs public, writing can be a great way for seniors to document their own lives and the lives of their families. Interest in genealogy has risen considerably in recent years, as easily accessible websites like Ancestry.com and 23andMe.com have made it easier than ever for individuals to learn where they came from. Seniors can contextualize the information provided by genealogy websites by writing about their personal experiences and sharing what they know about the lives of their parents, siblings, grandparents and other family members.
- **Gardening:** Seniors looking for hobbies that get them out in the great outdoors need look no further than their own backyards. Gardening can benefit the body in myriad ways. According to the Mayo Clinic Health System, gardening can burn as many calories as working out in the gym. In addition, the MCHS notes that individuals who grow their own fruits and vegetables are more likely to include those foods in their own diets, thus saving them money at the grocery store and also increasing their intake of nutrient-rich foods.
- **Swimming:** Swimming is an ideal exercise for seniors, as it's low-impact but still a great way to utilize the entire body. A 2007 study published in the journal Quality of Life Research found that water-based exercise improves older adults' quality of life and decreases disability. A separate study published in 2008 in The Journal of Sports Medicine and Physical Fitness found that water-based exercise can improve or help to maintain bone health in post-menopausal women.

These are just a few of the many hobbies seniors can pursue as they look for positive and fun ways to spend their free time.

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## HOW TO ENJOY A HEALTHY SUMMER

Colds might not be as common in summer as they are in winter, but anyone who has ever had a cold when the weather outside is warm and inviting knows just how unpleasant a runny nose, sore throat and lack of energy can be when everyone else seems to be outside soaking up the sun. Indeed, there's no substitute for feeling fit and healthy in summer.

A healthy summer is one when individuals avoid illness and make the most of a time of year when no one wants to battle colds or other issues that affect their well-being. The following are a handful of strategies that can help people enjoy a healthy summer.

- **Protect your skin from the sun.** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends individuals apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a sun-protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher before going outside. Sunscreen should then be reapplied as necessary and especially after swimming or excessive sweating. The American Cancer Society notes that sunburn that blisters can increase risk for skin cancer, but sunburns affect short-term health as well. Studies have shown that sunburn adversely affects immune system response, which could make people more vulnerable to viruses like COVID-19 or the common cold.

- **Limit alcohol consumption.** Social schedules tend to fill up in summer, as seemingly everyone wants to host a backyard barbecue. The party vibe synonymous with summer leads to increased opportunities to drink alcohol, but excessive amounts of alcohol and summer sun are a bad combination. According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, hot summer days increase fluid loss through perspiration, while alcohol contributes to fluid loss through an increased need to urinate. Significant fluid loss can lead to dehydration and heat stroke.

- **Eat the right foods.** Summer is not typically as hectic a time of year as other seasons, particularly for parents accustomed to driving kids from one activity to another during the school year. But come summer, weekends filled with social engagements and a greater desire to be active outdoors can prove exhausting. The CDC notes that a diet filled with colorful fruits and vegetables supports muscles, strengthens bones and boosts immunity. That can make it easier to handle a physically active summer regimen and ensure that the

immune system is in better position to fight off anything that may want to get in the way of summer fun.

- **Get adequate sleep.** What's better than a midday summertime nap? The answer to that is better sleep overnight. Adults should aspire to get between seven and eight hours of sleep each night, which can fortify their immune system and ensure they don't miss out on any summertime fun. According to the Mayo Clinic, sleep deprivation can lead to decreased production of proteins known as cytokines, which are vital to fighting infection and inflammation.

A healthy summer makes for a more enjoyable summer. By embracing various immune-boosting strategies, individuals can make this summer even more fun.



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## What To Do When Migraines Strike

Headaches may be a common nuisance, but that doesn't mean they share common characteristics. For example, migraine sufferers may attest that these headaches can be much harder to endure than others.

The health and wellness resource Healthline says a migraine is a neurological condition that typically causes painful headaches which are accompanied by other symptoms, such as sensitivity to smell, touch, light and sound. Migraines also may produce numbness or tingling, visual auras and nausea/vomiting.

The American Migraine Foundation advises that migraine attacks feature distinct phases. Recognition and understanding of these phases can help to manage headaches more effectively. Some of the earliest signs of migraine include fatigue, blurred vision, auras and other prodrome symptoms unique to people's migraine histories. These conditions can occur anywhere from a few hours to a few days before a migraine attack. It is important to note that symptoms may not occur with every migraine, nor will early symptoms always result in migraines.

Identifying potential migraine symptoms early may help a person reduce the severity of a migraine. Typically, the migraine headache stage can last for several hours or up to three days, says the AMF. People identify migraine pain as pulsating, throbbing pounding, perforating and debilitating. Some have compared it to having an ice pick inserted into the head.

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