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New Season Brings Unique Hazards for Dogs

Analysis by Dr. Karen Shaw Becker

Today is Labor Day, signaling that summer is coming to a close and fall is right around the corner.

As a dog parent, you know that each change of season comes with a list of potential hazards for furry family members. With autumn upon us and winter closing in, it's time for a refresher on some of the **potential hazards** presented by the change of seasons from warmer to cooler weather.

5 Fall Dangers for Dogs

1. Snakes — Snakes preparing for hibernation during the winter months may be more visible in the fall, which can increase your dog's risk of being bitten. Fortunately, most snakes in the U.S. aren't poisonous, but even a non-venomous **snakebite** can be dangerous for pets. Tips to keep your dog safe: If you see a snake, don't walk by it; turn around and head back the way you came. Clear away snake hiding spots in your yard by removing toys, tools, and undergrowth. Be aware that snakes can strike across a distance equal to about half their body length. Keep walkways clear of brush, flowers, and shrubs. Clean up any spilled food, fruit, or birdseed, which can attract rodents, one of snakes' favorite foods, to your yard. When walking your dog, keep him on a **leash**.

Steer clear of long grasses, bushes, and rocks

Familiarize yourself with common snakes in your area, including those that are venomous

2. Mushrooms — Thankfully, 99% of mushrooms present little or no problem for pets or people, however, the remaining 1%

can be fatal for most mammals if ingested. And to make matters worse, very few people can tell the difference between a **toxic mushroom** and a safe one.

Since dogs typically come across wild mushrooms during walks and other outdoor activities, especially if you live in a region with lots of moisture, it's important to take extra care to keep pets away from areas where mushrooms might be sprouting.

Dogs tend to be attracted to two **deadly mushroom species**: Amanita phalloides and Inocybe. Both varieties have a fishy odor, which may be the lure. The Amanita muscaria and Amanita pantherina varieties of mushroom also have a fishy odor and are also frequently eaten by dogs. They contain the toxic compounds ibotenic acid and muscimol, which in rare instances can cause death in dogs.

The Inocybe and Clitocybe mushrooms contain a compound called muscarine that can be lethal to dogs. Since muscarine doesn't seem to be a problem for humans, it's assumed dogs must be uniquely sensitive to it. Some Scleroderma mushroom species are also toxic to dogs, but the poisonous substance hasn't yet been identified.

To ensure your dog isn't tempted, mushrooms in yards (yours and your neighbors') should be removed promptly before neighborhood pets have a chance to notice them. As a general rule, veterinarians and pet poison experts consider all mushroom ingestions in pets toxic unless a quick and accurate identification of the mushroom can be made.

If you know or suspect your dog has eaten a mushroom, immediately contact your veterinarian, the nearest emergency animal clinic, or the 24/7 Pet Poison Helpline at 855-764-7661. If your pet throws up or poops, collect a sample, place it in a plastic bag, and bring it with you.

Important note about mushrooms: Widespread misinformation on the internet stating that all mushrooms are poisonous for pets has resulted in many pet owners denying their animal companions the amazing healing properties of medicinal mushrooms.

The same species of culinary mushrooms that are medicinal for humans are also medicinal for pets, and the species that

should be avoided for humans should also be avoided for pets. Dispelling mushroom myths is important to me because the **health benefits of certain mushrooms** can be lifesaving and life enhancing for many pets.

3. Rodent poison — Once the weather turns cool, rats and other rodents start looking for shelter and warmth in and under buildings, and in response, people start putting out rodenticides that are unfortunately highly toxic to pets.

Homeowners put out bait to control the mice and rats, assuming their pet won't or can't get into it. Even people who hide the bait around their homes can wind up with a poisoned dog. Tips for protecting your pet from rodent bait toxicity:

•If you have rodents around your home, I recommend a live trap called the **Havahart®**, which is a humane trap that catches mice, rats and other rodents so you can remove them from your home without using toxins or poisoning your environment.

•If you must use a bait trap with a killing agent, select a product that contains an active ingredient other than deadly **bromethalin**. For example, diaphacinone and chlorophacinone are short-acting anticoagulants, and most veterinarians will be familiar with standard methods of diagnosis and treatment. But again, I don't advocate using these products.

•Supervise your dog when she's outside to insure she never has a chance to consume rodents or rodent bait around your home or neighborhood.

Needless to say, if you suspect your pet has ingested any type of rodenticide, get her to your veterinarian or the nearest emergency animal hospital right away, and if possible, bring a sample of the product she consumed so the vet staff knows what type of poison they're dealing with.

4. Engine coolants — Another substance people use in the colder months of the year that is highly toxic to pets is antifreeze. Fortunately,

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The deadline for the December issue is November 8

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LOOK

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Please write down or save the User Name and Password as there is quite a bit of pertinent information in our Members Section.

NEW APPLICANTS

Patricia A Case-Standing

P.O. Box 522
Saint James City, FL 33956
Patricia would like to become a member because she has owned three Miniature Schnauzers, one was a rescue and another is a champion AKC black from breeder Marie Pletsch. She has read and agrees to abide by the AMSC Code of Ethics and the Breed Standard. She is not a breeder, but is involved in Conformation. Patricia attends between five and ten events per year. She does not belong to any other dog clubs at this time, but has helped at the AKC booth in Orlando International dog show in 2019.
Sponsors: Marie Pletsch, Carol Ann Meitzler

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antifreeze poisoning can be easily avoided by following a few simple safety tips:

Look for antifreeze products containing the safer propylene glycol rather than highly toxic ethylene glycol

Keep antifreeze containers tightly closed and stored out of reach of your pets

Dispose of empty or used antifreeze containers properly

Be careful not to spill antifreeze, and if you do, clean it up immediately; check your car radiator regularly and repair leaks right away

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Don't let your pet roam unsupervised where he may have access to antifreeze

Fortunately, U.S. manufacturers of antifreeze and engine coolants have begun adding bittering agents (e.g., denatonium benzoate) to their products to discourage pets, children, and wildlife from sampling the sweet-tasting liquid.

5.School supplies — Another risk the change of seasons from summer to fall presents for pets is, believe it or not, back-to-school supplies. For example, if you've indulged your kids with fruit-scented pencils and erasers, they can attract your dog like a moth to a flame. Common school supplies that present a potential choking hazard for pets include:

Erasers
Glue sticks/bottled glue
Coins
Action figures/small dolls
Bouncy balls
Crayons
Markers
Pencils (small splinters can get lodged in the mouth and esophagus)
Pens (watch out especially for pen caps)
Paperclips

While these items are considered "low toxicity" to pets, there is the potential for GI upset and even a blockage, so be sure the kiddos keep their school supplies out of reach of four-legged family members.



Puppy Temperament Tests: A Tool to Help with Placement

By Hilarie Erb

As a breeder, you know how important it is to match puppies with the best possible homes, whether they are destined to be show dogs, working dogs, sport dogs, or companions. And of course, you have to decide which one to keep for yourself!

You watch them carefully from birth and get to know each personality as it develops. Temperament testing can give you a better idea of what a particular puppy might excel at or which home will be the best fit.

Michele Godlevski, founder and owner of Teamworks Dog Training in Raleigh, NC, is a Certified Behavior Consultant who has earned many championship level titles in agility and titles in rally and obedience.

She has conducted temperament tests for breeders for many years and says the testing can give insight into puppies' potentials.

"A temperament test is a snapshot of what potential a puppy has to offer," Michele said. "In my many years of performing them, I find that there are significant personality differences sprinkled into every litter. While a litter of Flat-Coated Retrievers might seem to all have strong retrieving drive compared to a litter of Chinese Crested puppies for instance, you can definitely choose which puppy in each litter is the most and least motivated by food or treats.

"Other tests that are helpful are problem-solving tests, resource-guarding tests, and toy-drive tests. These evaluations give you an idea of which puppy might be the best candidate for the dog sports you might be interested in or which one might be the best fit for your current pack."

Temperament test scores don't necessarily reflect exactly how a puppy will grow up, but they can give a good indication. A puppy's environment and socialization until adulthood have big impact. But temperament testing is a valuable tool that can be helpful in placing puppies in homes where they will thrive.

Michele said the ideal age to conduct temperament testing is 7 ½ weeks.

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“Of course, puppies go through many developmental stages, including fear periods, which shape their behavior as adults. Both good and bad experiences during the puppies first year of life have a major influence on what the adult version of that dog will be,” she said.

When she tests, Michele said it is evident which breeders have conducted early puppy socialization with their litters and she stresses that it is important for breeders to do that early groundwork with their pups.

“After that, it is the new owner’s responsibility to continue positive socialization experiences for the puppy, to get the best possible puppy from what good genetics and early socialization produced.”

Breeder Stephanie Rudderow of Difesa Cane Corso utilizes a few different types of temperament tests with her puppies and uses their responses as part of her decision-making process when placing them. But she said that her overall observations of the puppies carry more weight than the results of the tests.

“I have found temperament testing to be helpful, but it’s only a part of the decision-making process,” Stephanie said. “I can’t say that temperament testing tells me which sport a puppy will be suitable for.

“We do not prepare puppies for temperament testing; we prepare them for life past the breeder. We expose our puppies to many sights, sounds, and textures, and we introduce them to people. I work with the puppies individually to gauge biddability and drive.”

Breeders should not conduct their own temperament tests, but find a trainer or behaviorist with testing experience. Part of the testing is observing how the puppies interact with a stranger.

There are a variety of programs that test puppies on various behaviors, including:

- The Volhard Puppy Aptitude Test (PAT) is commonly used. There are 10 items that test for social attraction, following, restraint, social dominance, elevation dominance, retrieving, touch sensitivity, sound sensitivity, sight sensitivity, and stability.
- Avidog offers a Puppy Evaluation Test course that tests for numerous behaviors.
- Dognition consists of science-based games that assess a dog’s problem-solving abilities.

Envious Animals: Do Dogs Get Jealous?

It’s human nature to get jealous every now and again. For example, if you see someone snuggling with an adorable dog, you may wish that you were getting that same type of attention. What you may not expect is that your dog can have that same type of reaction when they see you interact with someone else.

According to *Psychological Science*, more than 80 percent of pet parents have observed jealous behaviors from their furry friends. Those reports have led researchers to study our canine companions and discover that dogs can exhibit jealous behaviors, just like people do.

On one paw, this jealousy is a sign that your dog really cares about you and wants to spend more time with you. On the other paw, this same desire for adoration can create some unhealthy habits. Now let’s break down what causes dogs to get jealous and how to prevent bad behavior.

Why Do Dogs Get Jealous?

Ultimately, dogs experience jealousy for the same reason that people can – someone or something else is getting the attention they crave. This feeling is especially strong when it involves their favorite person in the world. There are a variety of events that can trigger this sense of jealousy, including the following causes:

- You get close to or play with another dog.
- A new baby or puppy demands more of your attention.
- You interact with a significant other or loved one.
- A change in schedule or environment disrupts your dog’s normal routine with you.

All of these factors are very normal and understandable events. The challenge is that your dog doesn’t easily understand why you are focused on something else, your furry friend simply wants more of your time and attention.

Can Jealousy Lead to Bad Behavior?

A little jealousy isn’t always a problem. Pouting or huffing are small signs that your dog wants some more time with you or more attention. In these cases, you’ll be able to focus on your best friend in due time.

However, some dogs will take their jealousy too far. Dogs can get pushy or even aggressive in certain circumstances. For

example, you may notice your dog exhibit the following negative behavior:

- Your dog audibly whines and becomes animated if you greet or spend time with another person, dog, or task.
- Your dog growls at other people or animals if they get too close to you.
- Your dog pushes other people or animals out of the way to force themselves into the situation.
- Your dog lunges at or even nips or bites a dog or person who gets too close to you.
- Your dog acts out in other ways to attract attention, such as chewing on furniture.

Simply put, these actions are negative behaviors. It’s important to take measures to not only stop jealous behavior, but also teach your dog that these impulses are not okay.

How to Address Bad Behaviors Caused by Jealousy

Certain behaviors may require different measures than others, but the following strategies can help prevent possessive and overly protective actions and help your dog learn not to act out of jealousy.

Prevent reasons for jealous behavior

Sometimes the best way to stop a negative behavior is to prevent them from happening in the first place. If you know that certain triggers will cause your dog to act out, try to limit your dog’s exposure to those types of events. You can’t hide your dog from certain interactions – you’ll likely want to interact with other people or dogs at some point – but restricting these types of opportunities can help prevent your dog from using the behavior in the first place.

Don’t reward your furry friend for jealous behavior

Speaking of reinforcing certain behaviors, it’s important not to accidentally reward your dog when they act out of jealousy. If your furry friend starts exhibiting jealous behavior, such as whining or aggression, don’t make a big fuss because any notable reaction

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will only reinforce that your dog got exactly what they wanted – your attention.

In certain circumstances, the best plan of action is to simply ignore certain jealous behaviors. If your dog is trying to get your attention by acting sad, don't give in and reinforce that behavior. By just simply leaving the room or going about your business as you normally would, you will help your dog learn that whining isn't going to help.

There are also several situations where you need to either correct or redirect your dog's action to teach them that jealous behavior is not okay. The best approach is to be short and direct with your canine companion. If you catch your dog acting out, don't let them complete the action and tell them "no" or some other stern, verbal correction. Those lessons, along with preventative training, will go a long way toward teaching your dog better behavior.

Help your dog adjust to other people or dogs

Oftentimes, your dog will get jealous when you pay attention to someone else. This strained relationship can become a problem if you ever plan to see these people or animals again. Fortunately, a little patience and preparation can help your dog learn to accept these types of interactions.

The best way to help your dog adjust to you interacting with others is to involve your furry friend. If you get a new puppy, make sure to [slowly introduce them to each other](#) so that your dog can learn that this little furball is a part of the family. You can also take your dog on walks with your significant other or any other targets of jealousy.

These acts to integrate people or animals into your family will help your dog see them as an equal instead of an adversary stealing your attention. You still may need to correct or redirect certain behaviors, but that developing relationship will give your dog less of a reason to be territorial or upset with you when interacting with others.

Consult with an expert

If redirection, correction, and other steps aren't helping, working with a professional dog trainer or animal behaviorist may be needed. This is especially true if your dog is nipping or biting and you need to keep everyone involved, dogs and people, safe. Jealousy is a strong emotion that isn't

always easy for your dog to overcome. A specialist can work with you and your furry friend to take those extra steps necessary to make life better for both of you.

Beating Jealousy with Your Best Friend

It's understandable that your best friend loves spending time with you – you are a big part of your dog's life! However, it's important to make sure that your dog doesn't go overboard with that adoration. Through a combination of prevention, redirection, and consistent training, your dog can learn that it's okay not to have your attention at all times.

FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE: The following information is given to help conduct AMSC business more efficiently. Please remember that the Secretary and the AMSCOPE editor should **BOTH** be notified of address changes, club officers and specialty results.

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