

Back packing with your dog.

Now that summer is in full swing here in beautiful British Columbia, many of us enjoy the great outdoors with our canine companions. Being in the peace region of BC, we have access to many great hiking areas, Tumbler Ridge, and the Northern Rockies being a few. Hiking with your dog is great for one on one time, exercise, and not to mention a bear warning system

DO's:

- 1) Make sure your dog is in good shape for hiking, and that their pads are toughened up. Going on day hikes leading up to the trip can get their feet hardened. You can also take boots for your dog to wear in the rocky areas to ensure they don't injure their pads.
- 2) Take a small pharmacy kit for your dog, things to include are: Benadryl 2-4mg/kg orally every 6-8 hours. This can be used for insect bites, bee stings, and hives to help alleviate symptoms of allergic reactions. Pain killers can be nice to take along if your dog becomes injured or sore from a long day. Painkillers are prescription drugs. If you are interested in taking some with you make an appointment with us and we would be happy to talk about it with you. Bring some polysporin ointment to apply to sores or cuts and pliers or a Leatherman, to remove quills if needed. Lastly in your pharmacy kit, taking some light bandaging material may come in handy.
- 3) Collar and leash. You may be in areas that your dog can run free, but you still need to have the option of keeping them on leash. This is for their protection if they are trying to chase wildlife, and also prevents them from wandering off to visit other hikers. At night you may want to either tie your dog up in camp, or keep them in your tent to prevent them from wandering off.
- 4) Vaccines. Your pet needs to be up to date on their Rabies and DAP vaccines.
- 5) Getting your dog to pack a backpack is a great way for them to carry their owner food. Dogs can carry about 10-30% of their body weight. They need to have a well fitted pack that distributes the weight over their shoulders. Make sure that the items in the pack are sealed, when dogs get hot they may cool themselves off in a nearby pool. Also don't trust your dog to pack anything you can't afford to lose. Just like getting your dog in shape for hiking, you need to get them in shape with their pack. Starting with a lighter pack and working them up to 30% of their body weight will ensure your dog can make the trip.

DON'T's:

- 1) Try to prevent your dog from eliminating 100ft from water sources if possible, as well as bury their feces. This is the best way to avoid contamination.
- 2) Don't expect your dog to go everywhere you go. If you are climbing in steep terrain your dog may be unable to safely follow.
- 3) Don't let your dog chase wildlife, this could result in a run in with a porcupine. If this happens you need to remove the quills that you can, and bring your dog to the vet as soon as possible to ensure there are no quills stuck in the mouth and gums. It's important to grab the quills close to the base, so they don't break off when you pull them. Quills can migrate very fast and be life threatening if not attended to.
- 4) Don't expect your dog to be able to find water out on the trails. There will be times when fresh water is available, however you need to pack enough for your dog as well as yourself. When the

weather is hot dogs are susceptible to heat stroke. Ensuring they have enough water will help prevent this.

I hope you have a great hiking season, and feel free to give us a call at the DCVC with any questions before your trip.

