

Heat Stroke in Dogs



Knowing how to prevent, detect, and treat heatstroke could mean the difference between life and death for your furry companion one day.

Prevention

People often associate heatstroke with high temperatures, although it can also occur when humidity levels are high, despite the temperature. Heatstroke is also possible in hot, humid, and unventilated areas indoors. To avoid heatstroke:

- Never leave your pet alone in a parked vehicle. A parked car can become an inferno in minutes, even with the windows open, and your pet could quickly succumb to heatstroke inside.
- Take your daily walk or run with your dog in the early morning or evening, when temperatures are less extreme. Touch the sidewalk with the palm of your hand—if it feels too hot for you, it's also too hot for the pads of your pet's paws.
- Even if your pet loves the outdoors and spends the majority of his time basking in the nature of your backyard, it's best to provide him with an air-conditioned retreat if possible.
- While outside, be sure your pet has access to shade and shelter away from direct sunlight.
- Fresh water should always be available for your pet, and be sure to use a sturdy bowl, especially if you'll be away from home for a while. A water bowl that has tipped over is of no use to your thirsty pet.

Detection

Some signs that your pet is overheating include:

- Excessive panting and drooling
- Difficulty breathing
- Increased heart rate
- Mild weakness
- Stupor or actually collapsing

- Seizures
- Bloody diarrhea
- Vomiting

Short-nosed animals (e.g., Persian cats, pugs, boxers, and bulldogs) are more susceptible to heat stroke than their longer-nosed counterparts. Because of the shape of their faces, they are less effective at panting. Pets who are overweight, elderly, or have heart or lung diseases should be kept in air-conditioned rooms or in front of fans as much as possible.

Treatment

As soon as you see signs of heatstroke in your pet it is imperative that you begin a cooling method. Soak towels in lukewarm water and wrap your pet in them. It may feel counterintuitive to use lukewarm water, but never use cool or cold water because if the cooling happens too rapidly it can be detrimental to your pet. You can also place your pet in front of a fan to help reduce her body temperature or use cotton balls saturated with rubbing alcohol on the pads of her paws and her abdomen (be sure to not allow her to drink the rubbing alcohol).

After you've begun to cool your pet down, call your veterinarian for further instruction. In some cases, pets affected by heatstroke require intravenous fluids, blood pressure support, or other medications depending on the severity of their condition.

Conclusion

For those living in harsh winter climates, the summer can feel like being released from a long, cold, and dark tunnel. Despite how wonderful hot and humid weather may feel to you, remember to check on your pet regularly. If something seems amiss, intervene early.



We can help- Call (509) 928-PETS (7387)