



HEAT STROKE (Heat Exhaustion, Heat Cramps, Sunstroke)

What is Heat Stroke?

Heat stroke occurs when the body's internal temperature increases to or beyond the point of body function regulation. This usually happens when the environment is hot and humid (our monsoon season). If a pet is active and especially if it has inadequate ventilation under such circumstances, its body temperature can soar.

Dogs with short "pushed-in" noses, such as pugs, bulldogs, Pekingese, and boxers, are especially susceptible, since their restricted breathing don't allow enough air exchange for rapid heat loss and their throat membranes may swell with the exaggerated panting. Also large, heavy dogs like rottweilers and golden retrievers have a higher incidence.

Is Heat Stroke Really Dangerous?

In our area heat stroke is a leading cause of death in pets in the summertime. Yes, it is really dangerous, and it is definitely an emergency!

What are the Signs of Heat Stroke?

Often there is little warning. A pet may be playing outside, or going for a walk with its owner, or even just lying, resting in the sun. Heavy panting is the way dogs and cats try to cool themselves. They can't sweat like humans. As they get overheated they want to lie down in a cool spot and pant. As heat stroke develops the pet will show heavy panting, then increasing weakness, muscle tremors and finally collapse. They are taking short fast breaths and have a very fast heart rate. They will have a staring expression and may vomit or have diarrhea. Their gums are often bright red and the rectal temperature will be up to 109.5° F (normal is 100-102°).

At this point the brain swells and microscopic blood clots begin blocking the circulation in the vital organs. Death follows.

How is It Treated?

Heat stroke is a true emergency. The pet must be cooled rapidly, but carefully. Intravenous fluids and shock therapy are often needed. Some pets will respond quickly to treatment, while others may require several days of treatment. Some in spite of all attempts, will die. Time is of the essence.

Home Care Recommendations:

1. Water: Provide fresh, clean water at all times.
 2. Exercise: Restrict exercise for _____ days.
 3. Food:
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4. Environment: Keep your pet protected from the sun and in a cool place for _____ days. Avoid high temperatures and humidity, and poor ventilation.

Prevention is Better than Treatment

- Don't exercise or play with your pet outdoors on hot days.
- If you take it for a walk, do it when temperatures are cool (in the morning during the summer). Avoid walks during the humid monsoon season. Let them walk on cool grass, not hot sidewalks or streets.
- If your pet is panting hard and acting overheated, don't wait for heat stroke signs to develop, get it into some cool shade. If possible, wet it down with cool water on all parts of the body.
- If it becomes unconscious, it will probably die without extensive medical care. Rush it into the hospital after giving us a "heads up" phone call.

Please Call Us If...

- Your pet seems weak.
- Your pet has difficulty breathing.
- Your pet's general health changes.

Thank you for this opportunity to serve you!