

PREVENTING HEAT EXHAUSTION

A closed car or a poorly ventilated garage can be a death chamber for your pet during hot weather. You can prevent heat exhaustion simply by taking a few precautions.

Summertime travel with pets runs a high risk of heatstroke. Temperatures in a closed vehicle parked in the hot sun shoot up to 150°F or more in a very short time.

Parking in the shade with all the windows open a crack will help, but if you must leave your pet more than a very few minutes, it's best to leave him at home, or if you are vacationing, in a boarding kennel or at your motel while you are out for meals and sightseeing. In the short time it may take you to have lunch or go in a store, your pet may succumb to heat stroke if left in the car.

Coupled with the rising temperature of the hot vehicle, your pet may become distressed at being left alone. His excitement and possible overexertion from jumping around in the car will greatly increase the possibility of heat exhaustion.

If your pet is accompanying you on a trip by air, arrange your hot weather flights for either early morning or late evening when the air is cooler. Awaiting boarding out on the hot pavement in the confines of his shipping crate, he can develop heat stroke rapidly.

In addition, heatstroke can occur when animals are confined in a poorly ventilated garage or kennel on a hot day, confined in the hot sun without proper shade, ventilation, or access to plenty of fresh water, or are over-exercised in the heat of the day.

Dogs left chained out in the yard are prime candidates for heat exhaustion. They may become entangled and unable to get to shade or water. Struggling with entanglement or fighting off other animals speeds the process through overexertion.

Once the process of heat exhaustion begins, it progresses rapidly toward coma and death unless measures are taken immediately to reverse the rise in body temperature. Heatstroke results when the body temperature, normally 100.5°-102.5°F rises to 105-110°F. Pug-nosed breeds, obese pets, and older pets are much more susceptible to heat exhaustion.

In addition to rise in temperature, heavy panting occurs and the mucous membranes of the mouth initially become bright red. As the condition progresses, the feet and legs become hot to the touch and the bright red mucous membranes in the mouth turn pale because of decreased circulation. At this stage, pets may involuntarily void watery diarrhea.

Swelling in the brain may develop, causing critical complications. Involuntarily paddling movements and tremors may occur. The pet often appears to be unaware of its surroundings. They eventually lapse into a coma, the panting reflex stops, and they die of respiratory arrest.

Animals suffering from heat exhaustion need **IMMEDIATE EMERGENCY TREATMENT!** IF you are not within seconds of veterinary help, initiate cooling the pet before bringing in the pet.

The first concern is to lower body temperature by submerging the pet in COOL (NOT COLD) water, or hosing it down. The pet's temperature should be monitored at 10-minute intervals, removing the pet from



the cool water when his temperature reaches 103°F. The rectal temperature should be taken at 10-minute intervals for 30 minutes to be sure the temperature does not go back up.

During cooling, rubbing the feet and legs will promote circulation.

Once initial cooling has taken place, the second emergency objective is to prevent swelling in the brain through intravenous medications.

Survival largely depends on the duration and degree of heatstroke. Since the disease progresses rapidly, the speed with which the pet is cooled down and brought to the clinic for emergency treatment is critical. However, complications develop so rapidly, even emergency measures may not save the heatstroke victim. The best cure is prevention!

