

# Heat Stroke

Keep pets safe and cool during the summer months!



Dogs rely mainly on evaporative cooling [panting] to cool themselves. They don't sweat like us.



Hot/humid conditions or concurrent heart or lung disease may impact this.



Dogs who are overweight, have flat faces, or dark coats are at increased risk.

## Heat stroke/heat exhaustion

Heat injury is a life-threatening emergency for dogs and should always be treated immediately.

Your dog's normal body temperature is usually between 100-102.5 F. Temperatures over 105.8 F or higher are associated with heat stroke and the possibility for permanent injury, organ failure, or death if untreated.

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### EARLY SIGNS

Agitation, panting, noisy respiration, drooling, unsteady gait, weakness.

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### PROGRESSION

Collapse, vomiting/diarrhea, decreased responsiveness, seizures.

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### TREATMENT

Even if your pet seems better, treatment is essential to avoid serious complications.

## Prevention

Limit your pet's activity during hot/humid periods of the day. Walk and play in the early morning or evening. Be sure to always provide shade, fans if possible, and free access to fresh, clean water at all times. NEVER leave your dog or cat in a closed vehicle during the summer months, even if parked in the shade or even if your windows are cracked. A vehicle can overheat in as little as 8 minutes.

## Treatment

First Aid at home-Call the emergency line IMMEDIATELY at (575)524-2894. DO NOT immerse your pet in cold water, DO NOT apply ice. DO move your dog indoors with a fan or air conditioning, do apply wet towels to the groin and armpit areas. DO get your pet to the veterinarian as quickly as possible. Offer cool water, but do not encourage your pet to drink ice water. Even if your pet seems to be doing better, treatment is essential in involving permanent damage and long-term complications.



In the hospital, your veterinarian will likely monitor bloodwork, provide IV fluid support, treat your pet with corticosteroids and diuretics, and monitor urine production and organ function. Early treatment is critical to a successful outcome. Pets who are treated promptly and who show a positive response to treatment within 24-48 hours have a good chance of making a full recovery. Without medical intervention, 50% or more of these patients may die.

Without treatment, these patients may suffer from neurological damage, kidney failure, damage to the heart or liver, and other serious consequences including death.

## THE TONGUE TELLS...

Your dog's tongue is an amazing adaptive mechanism to deal with heat and increased body temperatures. Dogs cool themselves by moving air back and forth over the mucous membranes of the tongue and oral cavity [like a swamp cooler!]. Monitor your dog's tongue during exercise and the warmer times of the year—a tongue that is darker in color, pale, or suddenly appears bright red can be indicative of heat stress. Additionally, if your dog is panting and you begin to note their tongue curling at the tip, this is a warning sign that their body temperature is increasing. Cease physical activity and move these pets indoors to a cooler area right away.

