



Pawsitive Experience
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Heatstroke (Hyperthermia)

Heatstroke in dogs is a common occurrence in the summer months but is very preventable with some simple precautions. Make sure you exercise your dog where there is plenty of shade, have plenty of water available for them to drink, and do not over exercise them. Plan your summer hikes where you follow streams and rivers so your dog can cool down.

Do not leave your dog in the car for even a short period of time. The inside of a car, even with windows open a crack can reach 120-160 degrees in a matter of minutes! Leaving a dog in a pet carrier/crate in hot weather, especially one that is not well ventilated can be dangerous. Never muzzle your dog for more than 5 minutes in hot weather. Never tie your dog outside unsupervised in hot weather even with water available.

Extra precaution should be taken with dogs with shortened muzzles. Some examples of breeds would include your Mastiff breeds, Bulldog breeds, Boxers, Boston Terriers, Pugs, and Chows. These types of dogs have smaller airways. If your dog often snores, snorts or makes noises like whistles and wheezes he is probably a dog at higher risk. Extra precaution should be taken for older dogs, obese dogs, and dogs with heart disease.

Also many dogs love to exercise so much they don't know when to stop. Dogs who are obsessed with playing ball or Frisbee would fall into this category. Many hunting breeds with prey drive will just run and run until they drop. If you have a dog like this you may have to set limits for them.

Symptoms of moderate heat stroke are rapid panting, bright red tongue and gums and thick saliva. If your dog is exhibiting these symptoms get them cooled down immediately by submerging them in cool water, or use a garden hose or cool shower. Give them plenty of water. If they will drink Gatorade or Pedialyte this will help restore lost electrolytes. Make sure to also get them into a cool area and keep them calm and quiet and seek veterinary care as soon as possible.

Symptoms of severe heatstroke include gums and tongue that are pale or gray, walking with an unsteady gait and bloody diarrhea and vomiting. This is a vet emergency and your dog needs to be rushed to the vet. If you are further than 5 minutes from a vet, try to quickly cool them down with the examples above and have the dog soaking in cool wet towels on the way to the vet. There is some controversy in regards to using ice to cool dogs down, so cool wet towels would be the safest application.

Prevention of course is the best medicine. Stay Cool!

Meredith Gage

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