

## HEAT STROKE

On a 65 degree day, the temperature inside a car-with the windows slightly opened-will reach 102 degrees in 10 minutes. In 30 minutes it will go up to 120 degrees F. More heat in a dog's body than its cooling system can handle is usually fatal unless given first aid immediately!

**SYMPTOMS:** Heavy, rapid panting, an anxious dazed expression, very red gums and sometimes drooling. Skin in armpits and groin will feel very hot. Rectal temperature will be 104-107 degrees Fahrenheit.

**CAUSES AND PREVENTION:** A dog usually cools himself by panting. Panting cools by letting heat escape the body directly into the air that he is moving in and out. Panting also cools by evaporation from moist surfaces of the mouth, nasal passages, throat and windpipe.

**In addition to hot weather, other factors that can bring on heat stroke are:**

- Lack of drinking water, which can cause dehydration and prevents moistness of the nose and throat needed for evaporation.
- Structure. The facial structure of some dogs allow for less area for cooling.
- Thick and poorly groomed coats. A coat free from mats and properly combed out can actually help insulate from high temperatures. A matted coat traps body heat.
- Excessive exertion.

**Heat Stroke can be prevented by:**

- Providing fresh water during hot weather. Be sure he cannot turn the dish over.
- Confining the dog if he runs fences. The more active, the more heat is generated.
- Leaving the dog at home, rather than risk becoming overheated in the car.
- If left outside, provide shade, water and a wading pool in hot weather.

**Treatment:**

Lower the body temperature as quickly as possible. A few more seconds or another tenth of a degree could make the difference between life and death. Wet the dog down with the coldest water available. Put him in a bathtub or use a garden hose. Pack ice on his neck and body to cool the blood going to his head. If he will drink, let him have moderate amounts of water, but do not allow him to gulp it down so fast he makes himself vomit. If medical help is far away, a cool enema may be life saving. Even if he appears to be recovering, take him to a vet just as soon as you have done what you can to start cooling him. **Treatment for potential internal problems will be required.**