



## HEAT STROKE (HYPERTHERMIA)

Heat Stroke (heat prostration, hyperthermia) is an extreme elevation in body temperature resulting in a medical emergency. Body temperature gets so high that it exceeds an animal's capacity to dissipate heat, which causes direct damage to body organs and tissues. Treatment requires more than just cooling off in a different location, so it is important to bring your pet to the hospital as soon as possible if you ever suspect heat stroke.

Heat stroke may result from time spent inside a car (even with the windows down), long periods of exercise, or spending time outside in the summer without adequate shade or fresh water. Pets with diseases like heart disease, epilepsy, diabetes, Cushing's, Addison's, hyperthyroidism, and prior heat stress are more susceptible to heat stroke. Obese pets and brachycephalics (short nosed dogs) also carry a higher risk.

Signs of heat stroke include labored, rapid or difficulty breathing, dry or red gums, rapid heart rate and pulses, weakness, collapse, vomiting, diarrhea, depression or a comatose demeanor, and seizures. If you see any of these signs:

1. Take your animal to a veterinary hospital immediately.
2. Call ahead so that they may be prepared to begin treatment quickly. Heat stroke requires intensive medical therapy that may include IV fluids, oxygen therapy, blood analysis, cooling baths and oral medications.
3. Run the air conditioning during transport to veterinarian.
  - Do not use extreme methods like ice to cool your pet. If body temperature drops too rapidly, animals can decompensate and have an increased risk for a blood clotting crisis.

How to avoid heat stroke:

4. Never leave your animal unattended in the car including pick-up trucks.
5. Provide shade and plenty of fresh water for outdoor pets. Outdoor kennels need shade as well.
6. Schedule walks in the early morning or late evening. Allow your pet to set their own limits; do not force your dog to a long walk or jog unless that are in good physical shape.
7. Avoid poorly ventilated or enclosed areas like garages or sheds during warm weather.