

Heat Stroke

General Information

The combination of high temperature, high humidity, and poor ventilation can be fatal to dogs and cats- Dogs and cats do not sweat as people do. Thus the cooling benefits of water evaporation from the skin are not available to them. Panting and radiation of heat from the skin surface are their main means of controlling body temperature. If the air temperature and humidity are high and air circulation is reduced, these protective mechanisms are inadequate. Body temperature can then increase dramatically, resulting in collapse and severe shock. Animals not treated promptly may die.

Dogs with a short, flattened nose, such as Pugs, Bulldogs, Pekingese, and Boxers, are especially susceptible to heat stroke, because their restricted breathing does not allow enough air exchange for rapid heat loss.

Important Points in Treatment

1. Treatment for heat stroke consists of rapid reduction of body temperature and medication for shock. Frequently, hospitalization is necessary.
2. *Water:* Provide clean, fresh water at all times.
3. *Activity:* **Restrict exercise for _____ days.**
4. *Environment:* Keep your pet protected from the sun and in a cool place for _____ days. Avoid high temperatures and humidity and poor ventilation.

Prevention

During hot, humid weather provide your pet with adequate ventilation, protection from the sun, and cool, fresh water.

In addition, limit your pet's exercise during these periods. If your pet is nervous, consult the doctor concerning the advisability of tranquilizers- Do *not* leave your pet in a closed automobile. This is an invitation to tragedy.

Notify the Doctor if Any of the Following Occur

- Your pet seems weak.
- Your pet has difficulty breathing.
- Your pet's general health changes.