

PREVENTING HEAT EXHAUSTION

Heat stroke is a major concern for pet owners. Humans and animals respond differently when they get too hot.

Humans are able to sweat to cool themselves; dogs and cats cannot sweat and must rely on panting to make themselves more comfortable. Panting isn't a very efficient method of cooling off when it gets very **hot** and/or humid, however, and as a result, dogs and cats can **overheat**. With dogs this is especially true if they are overweight, have a thick coat, have heart or lung problems, or have a short muzzle.

Heat stroke is preventable. When the weather is warm, your companion animals must have access to plenty of water and should not be left outside for long periods. If you must leave your animal outside, make sure that they have a cool, shady area in which to rest.

Additionally, if you exercise your animal, do it in the early morning or late evening – not in the middle of the day when temperatures are at their peak. And **NEVER** leave your animal in a car, even if you leave the windows down. Your furry friend could die of **heat** stroke in as little as 10 to 15 minutes. A closed car or a poorly ventilated garage can be a death chamber for your pet during **hot** weather.

Heatstroke can occur when animals are confined in a poorly ventilated garage or kennel on a **hot** day, confined in the **hot** sun without proper shade, ventilation, or access to plenty of fresh water, or are over-exercised in the **heat** of the day. Dogs left chained out in the yard are prime candidates for **heat** exhaustion. They may become entangled and unable to get to shade or water. Struggling with entanglement or fighting off other animals speeds the process through overexertion.

Once the process of **heat** exhaustion begins, it progresses rapidly toward coma and death unless measures are taken immediately to reverse the rise in body temperature. **Heatstroke** results when the body temperature, normally 100.5°-102.5°F rises to 105-110°F. Animals suffering from **heat** exhaustion need **IMMEDIATE EMERGENCY TREATMENT!**

Survival largely depends on the duration and degree of **heatstroke**. Since the disease progresses rapidly, the speed with which the pet is cooled down and brought to the clinic for emergency treatment is critical. However, complications develop so rapidly, even emergency measures may not save the **heatstroke** victim. The best cure is prevention!

If you have any questions or problems, please call your caring healthcare team at Legacy Veterinary Hospital. Thank you!

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