



HEAT STROKE 101



WHAT IS **HEAT STROKE** (aka hyperthermia)?

Severe elevation in body temperature - - **104.9 to 109.4** - - caused by environmental conditions. Hyperthermia affects nearly every system in the body and can be a life threatening situation.

Normal temperature: DOGS = 99.5 to 102.5 CATS = 100.0 to 103.1

HOW CAN HEAT STROKE OCCUR?

- Most commonly when animals are confined in vehicles or kept outdoors on hot, humid days
 - A recent study from Stanford University Medical Center found that the temperature in a vehicle may increase by an average of 40 degrees Fahrenheit within one hour (VeterinaryPartner.com)
- Excessive exercise in the heat/humidity
- Inability for pet to dispel heat and/or pants excessively
 - Especially common in brachycephalic (short-nosed) breeds such as Pugs, Bulldogs, Pekingese, Boston Terriers, etc. These breeds have soft palates that are too long which causes breathing difficulty, especially when panting.

WHAT ARE THE **SIGNS** OF HEAT STROKE?

Panting, collapsing, vomiting, loss of balance, hypersalivation (drooling), diarrhea, seizures

WHAT TO DO:

- Remove pet from the heat & into a cooler environment
- Soak pet's coat with cool water (NOT COLD!) and provide a fan
- Apply cool compresses (wet towels) to the armpits, back of neck, and groin region
- If possible, obtain rectal temperature
- Transport pet to veterinary hospital immediately

- **DO NOT** use cold water or ice to cool the pet
- **DO NOT** over-cool the pet – aim for reducing pet's temperature to 102.5 – 103.0 F
- **DO NOT** force cold water into pet's mouth, but have fresh, cool water available if pet is alert and able to drink

Even though **EVERY** pet is at risk for heat stroke, some pets are naturally **MORE** susceptible to heat stroke because they are...

- *Geriatric or juvenile (puppies/kittens)
- *Thick-coated (Huskies, Great Pyrenees, Chows)
- *Suffering from a pre-existing medical condition
- *Overweight
- *Dark-coated (Dobermans, Rottweilers)
- *Brachycephalic (short-nosed)