



PROTECT PETS FROM SUMMER SCORCHERS

With the dog days of summer before us, pet owners should beware of the dangers of heatstroke in pets. The American Animal Hospital Association offers a few tips to protect pets during the summer heat waves.

Parked cars are potential death traps for pets during the warm months. Even on a mild, sunny day the temperature inside the car can quickly climb to more than 120 degrees. Never leave your pet alone in a parked car.

If your pet lives outdoors, make sure there is adequate shelter for protection from midday sun and heat. Outdoor kennels should be well-ventilated and in a shaded area. There should always be some shade for the pet to get out of the sun. Also, make sure there is plenty of fresh drinking water available for your pet. The bowl should be placed in a shaded area where it cannot be heated by the sun. Provide a few bowls in case your pet tips one over.

Exercise is important, but overexertion during hot weather commonly causes heat stress. Avoid excessive during hot days. Keep your pet well groomed. Watch for hair mats, which can retain heat for your animal.

The warning signs of heatstroke include panting, staring or anxious expressions, a refusal to obey commands, warm and dry skin, high fever, rapid heartbeat and possibly vomiting. If your pet shows these signs, lower body temperature quickly with cool water, either by immersion or by spraying thoroughly with a garden hose. Be careful not to overcool your pet and never use ice. Call your veterinarian immediately.

Heatstroke is a life-threatening condition that results when pets cannot adequately rid themselves of excess body heat. Pets rely on panting to cool them down. Although panting is a very efficient way to control body heat, it is severely limited in areas with high humidity or low ventilation. The intake of cool, fresh water improves the cooling effects of panting.

The Absecon Veterinary Hospital is an accredited Hospital member of the American Hospital Association, an international association of more than 22,000 veterinary care providers who treat companion animals. AAHA hospital members are regularly inspected to ensure they meet AAHA's high standards for pet care.