

Heat Exhaustion

Things to remember

During the warmer months we must pay particular attention to the needs of our pets. Dogs and cats have a very different thermostat to that of humans. When temperatures are above 30 degrees, pet owners who don't provide appropriate shelter and water can expect to see signs of great distress in their cat or dog and in extreme cases, this can lead Heat Exhaustion and possibly to death.

Extreme heat is a challenge for everyone especially our pets. During heat waves and hot days it is vital that you take extra precautions to keep your pets cool and prevent them from falling victim of heat exhaustion.

Dogs

For dogs, heat exhaustion can be dangerous – even fatal. In many cases heat exhaustion is preventable and there are a few simple things you can do to protect your dog this summer. It is important to note that short-nosed (brachycephalic) breeds of dogs are at higher risk of heat exhaustion than other breeds. Extra care also need to be taken with dogs that are obese, elderly, arthritic or have respiratory difficulties as they dogs are more prone to heat exhaustion than other dogs.

Cats

If your cat begins to pant, this is not a good sign and you need wrap the cat in a cool, wet towel immediately. Monitor signs and symptoms and if in any doubt seek veterinary treatment immediately.

Rabbits

For Rabbits it is important to keep them cool as they do not cope well in the heat. Either shelter them indoors where it is cool or freeze a bottle of water, wrap it in a towel and leave it for them to lay against.

Signs of Heat Exhaustion

Dogs (in particular) suffering from heat exhaustion will usually show the following symptoms:

- Restlessness
- Excess salivation
- Panting
- Vomiting
- Increased respiratory rate
- Diarrhea

As the symptoms progress, the animals body temperature will increase and the signs become even more serious and life threatening:

- Weakness
- Seizures
- Staggering
- Gasping
- Gum colour may become red, then purple or blue (cyanosis)
- Coma and death

If you suspect heat exhaustion, be sure to take your pet to a veterinary clinic for immediate medical attention. Severe cases may result in the need for animals to receive IV fluids, seizure medication etc.

