



Spot News: June 2008

Hot Dogs

Kate Morris Photography

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HOT DOGS:

Keeping summer fun and how to protect your dog from heat stroke, sunburn and dehydration. It's 30C out have you checked your dog today?

Did you know that dogs overheat more quickly than humans do? So even if you are comfortable in the heat your dog may not be. Dogs do not sweat like we do, although they cool their bodies by sweating through their pads, their primary method for relieving excess body heat is through panting. Panting exchanges warm air inside their bodies for cooler air outside; however when the outside temperature is the same or higher than the dog's normal body temperature panting will not work to cool down their body. A dog's normal body temperature is about 38.3C to 38.8C, but when his body temperature is above 41.1C it is extremely dangerous and life threatening as the dog has lost its ability to cool itself and it is now life threatening.

Causes:

- Being left in a care in hot weather. Never leave your dog in the car even for a few minutes. On a 26.6C day outside heat inside your car can reach 48.9C in as little as 10 minutes! Leaving windows open a crack help very little, especially if there is no breeze. The single most frequent cause of heat stroke in dogs is overheating in parked cars.
- Excessive or strenuous exercise in hot or humid weather.
- Being muzzled under a hair dryer or on a hot day - they cannot breathe or pant efficiently.
- Being confined to a space without shade or water in hot weather.
- Being confined to concrete or asphalt surfaces in hot weather

All dogs are susceptible to heat stroke but overweight dogs, older more frail dogs, as well as *brachycephalic* (short nosed breeds) are at higher risk.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Rapid, heavy frantic panting or difficulty breathing
- Thick and tenacious saliva, dry mouth.
- Profuse sweating from paw pads.
- Bright red tongue, gums redder than normal.
- Weakness, diarrhea, vomiting, staggering.
- Collapse, seizure, coma and death can ensue rapidly.

Treatment: Heat stroke is deadly. It is an emergency and measures to cool the dog must begin at once. Immediately remove the dog from the hot temperature. If the rectal temperature is more than 40C begin **rapid cooling**. Cool the dog in whatever way you can. Spray the dog with a garden hose or immerse them in a tub

of cool (not cold or ice water) or use cool compresses on his neck, head, abdomen, groin, feet, use fans and/or air conditioning. Offer the dog plenty of cool water to drink or ice chips to eat. Monitor their rectal temperature and continue the cooling process until the rectal temperature is below 39.4C. At this point stop cooling as further cooling may produce hypothermia. Take the dog to your veterinarian as soon as possible. Even if your dog appears fine do not assume everything is fine. Internal organs can be affected by body temperature elevations as well as there may be neurological problems.

Tips to prevent your dog suffering in the heat