

# Preventing Heatstroke

Heatstroke can have deadly consequences. The best way to keep your pet safe during the hot summer months is to avoid circumstances that can lead to heatstroke. The following information can help you recognize the signs of heatstroke and take action if you suspect this condition in your pet. Remember, prevention is the best way to keep your pet safe!

## Pets Prone to Heatstroke

- Flat-faced breeds of dogs (e.g., pugs, boxers, Lhasa apsos, shih tzus, Boston terriers, Pekingese) and cats (e.g., Persians)
- Young puppies and kittens
- Older pets
- Overweight pets

## Signs

- Bright red or pale gray, tacky gums
- Sticky drool
- Rapid panting
- Weakness
- Muscle incoordination
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Rapid heart rate
- Collapse
- Shock
- Seizures

## What to Do If You Suspect Your Pet Has Heatstroke

- Try to cool the animal by either submersing him in cool water or placing cool, wet towels on the abdomen and groin (these areas have a large blood supply). **Do NOT use extremely cold water or ice as they will hinder cooling.**
- Contact your veterinarian immediately.

## Tips for Prevention

- Exercise your pet in the early morning or late evening; avoid midday activities.
- *Never* leave your pet in a closed vehicle – even for a few minutes.
- Take special care of any pets that are kept outdoors, including rabbits. Make sure outdoor pets have access to cool shelter and plenty of water.
- Consider a wading pool for outside dogs; the water can be kept cool by filling a water jug or plastic soda bottle with water, freezing it, and floating it in the pool. Make sure that the pool is not too deep for the dog.
- Place a frozen water bottle inside your rabbit's cage.
- Apply SPF 15 sunscreen on tender areas on dogs with light pigment or thin hair; avoid zinc-based products in case the animal licks it.
- Encourage liquid and calorie intake by mixing one jar of meat baby food with one jar of water. Freeze into ice cube treats for your pet.
- Watch out for asphalt because it can cause second-degree burns on your pet's feet.