

HEATSTROKE CAN KILL

In summertime, the most common cause of Hyperthermia or Heatstroke is over exposure to heat. Every year, across the globe, pets suffer and die from being left in locked vehicles. In the temperatures and the humidity we have been experiencing this week, it would only take a few minutes for a pet to succumb, and to my amazement, many people do not realize this fact.

The most common symptoms of heatstroke are excessive panting, restlessness, agitated, being unable to stand or lying down, thick saliva in the mouth, and froth coming from the nose or mouth. The pet will be in shock and the body may seem rigid, with the pet extending its head, neck and limbs. If not removed from the situation, the pet will suffer a horrible death.

Should you find a pet in this terrible situation, for first aid, do all that YOU can to remove the pet from the cause of the hyperthermia, taking care not to injure yourself. Take the pet to a shady or cool area and fan the pet rapidly. If available, pour cool not cold water over the pets' trunk and legs, and get the pet to a veterinarian as soon as possible. Try not to over cool the pet, and do not force cold water or ice down its throat.

Heatstroke can also occur when pets are left in garages (even if a window is left open), or kennels without shade. Dogs can also experience heat exhaustion when their owners take them out as jogging partners. Some owners do not realize that unlike the human body, the dog's body does not have a cooling system.

Whilst we all know that exercise is as important as food to our pets, inappropriate or excessive exercise in hot weather should be avoided. If you feel that you are thirsty when you are out walking, assume that your dog is also thirsty. Take some water along for the pet too! Sit in the shade and share a drink.

One last point I would like to mention, which is sometimes overlooked, is the fact that older pets and pups do not handle the heat as well as active young pets. As an example, Rudy, a lovely old Retriever I had many years ago was arthritic and very senile. She would always want to sleep under the lilac tree, despite the temperature. I made a point of keeping an eye on her, as she slept so deeply. She did not have the sense, at that stage, to remove herself indoors.

I apologize for being so graphic about the symptoms of heatstroke, but it is important that people are made aware of the dangers. It may save a lith.

On a lighter note, I wish you and your pet a wonderful healthy and happy summer.