



Heat Stroke in Pets – Is My Pet at Risk?

Summer is in full swing! During the summer months, heat stroke is often a serious consequence of overheating in pets. Heat stroke occurs from obvious causes such as being left in a car, but there are also less obvious reasons that should be noted. Since pets cool their bodies primarily through panting, not sweating, any impairment to their respiratory capabilities can put them at risk for heat stroke when outdoors during the summer months. Short-faced dog breeds, such as bulldogs and pugs, and purebred cats, such as Persians and ragdolls, have physical characteristics that limit their respiratory abilities. Older pets, pets with heart disease, those with chronic respiratory disorders, and overweight pets are also at risk of heat stroke, even when simply resting outside in the heat. Keep these pets indoors as much as possible, but if they are outside, always have at least two sources of fresh water and plenty of shade available.

Additional Summer Health Concerns in Pets

The Texas heat always brings a unique set of pet health issues to our practice. In addition to heat stroke, the summer brings higher numbers of infectious disease cases through our doors.

Parvo outbreaks are common; leptospirosis increases as suburban wildlife (raccoons, opossums, rats and mice) move into neighborhoods in search of food and water. Fleas, flea allergies, and flea anemia become more widespread. Footpads may become burned from walking on asphalt surfaces. Drowning, unfortunately, occurs as pets fall into pools and panic while trying to find a way out. Heartworms are more readily transmitted when mosquitoes are active, usually 10-14 days after a rain.

Fortunately, most of these problems can be prevented with good routine veterinary care. The same guidelines we use for ourselves can be applied to pets. Always maintain a good source of fresh water, make sure shade is available when pets are unattended outdoors, keep vaccines current against common infectious diseases, and prevent parasite problems through an appropriate preventive program.

