

HEATSTROKE IN DOGS

*Recognising, Responding & Preventing
a Life-Threatening Emergency*

Heatstroke can develop rapidly and can be fatal.
Early recognition and immediate treatment
can save your dog's life.

**Heatstroke is
a medical emergency.
Act quickly –
every minute
counts!**

1 WHAT IS HEATSTROKE?

Heatstroke occurs when a dog's body
temperature rises too high and their
body cannot cool down.
It can lead to organ damage, brain
injury, and death.

Common causes include:

- High ambient temperatures
- Exercise in hot or humid conditions
- Poor ventilation
- Leaving dogs in cars
- Lack of shade and water



2 DID YOU KNOW?

- 🐾 Dogs cool down mainly by
panting and have very few
sweat glands.
- 🐾 Short-nosed (brachycephalic)
breeds and overweight dogs
are at higher risk.
- 🐾 A car can heat up quickly –
even with windows cracked.
- 🐾 Heatstroke can occur on
mild days if humidity is high
or in poorly ventilated areas.

3 RECOGNISE THE SIGNS

Signs may develop suddenly and include:

- ✓ Excessive panting
- ✓ Bright red gums and tongue
- ✓ Thick, sticky saliva
- ✓ Weakness or collapse
- ✓ Vomiting or retching
- ✓ Diarrhoea
- ✓ Rapid heartbeat
- ✓ Wobbliness or uncoordinated
- ✓ Difficulty breathing
- ✓ Seizures
- ✓ Unresponsiveness



Body temperature above 41°C (106°F)
is a medical emergency.

4 HIGH-RISK DOGS

Dogs most at risk include:

- Brachycephalic breeds
(e.g. Pugs, Bulldogs)
- Puppies and senior dogs
- Overweight dogs
- Dogs with heart or
respiratory disease
- Very active dogs
- Dogs unaccustomed
to heat



5 WHAT SHOULD I DO?

If you suspect heatstroke:

- ✓ Move your dog to a cool, shaded area
- ✓ Offer small amounts of cool (not
ice-cold) water to drink
- ✓ Wet your dog with cool water
(not ice-cold)
- ✓ Use a fan or air conditioning
- ✓ Seek veterinary treatment
immediately

DO NOT:

- ✗ Use ice or very cold water
- ✗ Leave your dog unattended
- ✗ Delay treatment



6 HOW IS HEATSTROKE TREATED?

Your veterinarian may provide:

- ✓ Rapid cooling
- ✓ Intravenous fluids
- ✓ Oxygen therapy
- ✓ Medications
- ✓ Monitoring of vital signs
- ✓ Blood tests
- ✓ Hospitalisation
- ✓ Intensive care if needed



7 PREVENT HEATSTROKE

Help keep your dog safe:

- ✓ Always provide fresh water
- ✓ Ensure access to shade
- ✓ Avoid exercise during
hot weather
- ✓ Never leave dogs in cars
- ✓ Keep cars cool if
your dog must travel
- ✓ Provide good ventilation
- ✓ Groomed coats, not shaved
- ✓ Know the signs and
act early



8 RECOVERY & AFTERCARE

Recovery depends on severity.
Your dog may need:

- Rest and quiet
- Follow-up examinations
- Blood tests
- Ongoing medication
- Supportive care at home
for several days



Early treatment improves the
chance of a full recovery.

COMMON COMPLICATIONS

Organ Damage

Heatstroke can affect
the heart, liver,
kidneys and brain.



Brain Injury

Severe cases can
cause swelling and
neurological damage.



**Blood Clotting
Disorders**

Heatstroke can affect
blood clotting and lead
to serious complications.



Respiratory Failure

Difficulty breathing
can progress to
respiratory failure.



ADDITIONAL TIPS



Walk your dog early
in the morning or
late in the evening.



Check the ground
temperature – if it's
too hot for your hand,
it's too hot for paws.



Provide shade
and water at all
times outdoors.



Never rely on
cracked windows
in the car.



Be aware of humidity –
high humidity increases
risk of heatstroke.



EVERY DOG COUNTS

If your dog is panting excessively,
drooling, vomiting, collapsing,
or showing any signs of heat
distress, act immediately.

**Heatstroke is preventable,
but it can be fatal.**

Stay cool, stay safe,
and protect your dog.

