



Heat Stroke **by Dr. Andrea Crum**

How hot is too hot? The answer is not so simple. The level of tolerance for heat varies amongst dogs and cats based on breed and lifestyle. A pug, for instance, will have little tolerance for heat due to their squished face and, thus, their inability to cool themselves adequately. Dogs that live mostly outside will be much more tolerant; however, they can also over heat.

Heat stroke is commonly seen during the summer months in veterinary practices. The dog will present with a history of heat exposure and are usually non-responsive with an elevated temperature. These dogs must be cooled immediately! At home, you may spray rubbing alcohol on their paws to help begin the cooling process, but veterinary intervention is needed as soon as possible. Cold intravenous fluids will be administered along with other supportive care. Despite veterinary intervention, many pets lose their battle to heat, so prevention is the key to success. Prevent the heat stroke before it starts.

When hot temperatures hit your community, extra precautions should be taken to ensure the safety of your pet. Walking your dog should take place during the early morning or evening when the heat is not at its worst. When playing outside, make sure there is plenty of fresh water that is easily accessible for your pet. Create a safe zone, free of sun that provides an adequate breeze. Limit the amount of time your pet spends outside. Sometimes Fido's drive for fun can be his own worst enemy. With these extra precautions, humans and their furry friends can both enjoy the "dog days of summer".