

Dog & temperature



HYPERTHERMIA
or overheating



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Hyperthermia: the core body temperature is above normal. A normal dog's body temperature is between 37 and 39°C.

>41°C is a life threatening EMERGENCY!

► Causes

- **Impaired heat loss caused by:**

- » High external temperature
- » High humidity
- » Poorly ventilated environment
- » Excessive physical effort
- » Excessive emotions/arousal
- » Stress

- **Fever**

Fever occurs when the body "fights" against bacteria, viruses, tropical parasites or autoimmune diseases.

- **Some dogs are at greater risk for overheating:**

- » Brachycephalic breeds (short nosed/flat faced, f.e. Bulldogs, Boxers ...)
- » Thick coated
- » Puppies
- » Old dogs
- » Overweight dogs
- » Sick dogs

► Signs

Recognizing the (first) signals is very important:

- » Rapid breathing/panting
- » Dry nose and mouth (drooling can be seen later)
- » Color changes in the tongue and/or gums, dull greyish or red gums
- » Thick saliva may froth at mouth
- » Skin is hot to the touch
- » Anxious/fearful expression
- » Unsteadiness, fast heart rate
- » Vomiting
- » Diarrhea
- » Skin around muzzle or neck doesn't nap back when pinched
- » Glassy eyes
- » Disorientation
- » Depression/lethargy
- » Unwilling or unable to get up
- » Collapse
- » Unresponsiveness/coma
- » Body temperature of 40 - 43°C



► First aid

Call your vet!

Ask someone else to call the vet while you start to cool your pet.

- » Remove the dog from the hot to a cool **environment**.
- » Use water, ice packs **in towels** or wet towels to place over the back, neck and tummy/groin, do the same on ears and paws.
- » Direct a fan to blow on the dog.

Ensure gradual temperature correction!

Rectal temperature every 15 minutes. Lift the tail and insert the thermometer slowly and carefully into the rectum, located just below the base of the tail. Insert the thermometer about 2 cm and hold in place, 2 minutes for mercury thermometers or until the digital thermometer beeps.

After the dog has begun to cool down, offer small amounts of water. **Do not force!**

To avoid shock: don't immerse the dog in cold water!



► Treatment

Your dog will have to be admitted to the veterinary clinic. Once the body temperature has been reduced, any additional problem caused by the hypothermia need to be addressed. Your vet will need to do blood tests to monitor the function of organs such as the kidneys and liver. Dogs that survive the initial few hours following overheating will often need to be in intensive care for a few days. Clotting disorders are very common in the aftermath of heat stroke and your vet will want to monitor your pet closely.

However with prompt treatment some dogs will make a full recovery. Others may survive but may be left with permanent damage. The prognoses mainly depends on the duration of the hyperthermia.

► Effects

- » Collapse
- » Seizures
- » Coma
- » Organ failure: the important organs like the heart, brain, liver and kidneys become damaged. Even immediate treatment and effective cooling can leave the dog with internal damage that may affect long term health.
- » Death

► **Prevention**

Overheating is a very frightening condition and can kill a healthy animal in as little as 20 minutes.

PREVENTION IS THE ONLY PROTECTION!

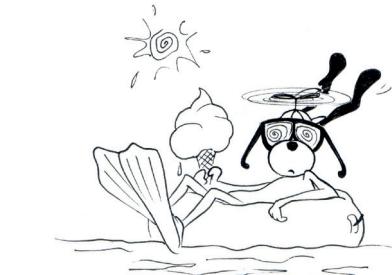
- » Restrict exercise on hot days.
- » Pay attention to the surface, asphalt is quickly too hot. Too hot for your bare feet = too hot for dog paws!

Outside temperature	Temperature of the asphalt
25°C	51,6°C
30°C	57,2°C
30,5°C	61,7°C



- » NEVER leave the dog in a car/vehicle, hot room or sun trap.

Outside temperature	after 10 min	after 30 min
21°C	31,6°C	40°C
24°C	34,4°C	43°C
26°C	37°C	45,5°C



- » Ensure drinking water and a cool shaded spot is always available.
- » Spray with cool water.
- » Walk early in the morning or late in the evening.
- » A properly groomed coat keeps dogs cool in the summer. A dry, fluffed, tangle-free coat traps a layer of cool air to help insulate the dog against overheating.

