

## Heat Stroke/Exhaustion Information for Bulldog Owners

Every dog is a potential victim of heat exhaustion, but the shorter breathing system of the Bulldog is what puts them at such very strong risk for heat stroke. Shorter airway means less possibility of cooling the air which the dog draws into its body. Dogs do not sweat. Their only means of reducing built-up body heat is by panting. The leading cause of heat exhaustion, (and it's advancing into heat stroke) is leaving a dog in a hot car, but there are other things that cause it like the loss of electricity in your home on a hot day while you are at work, etc. Even on a mild day (75-85 degrees), the temperature inside a car can raise up to 130 degrees rather quickly. Leaving a window slightly open will not prevent heat buildup.

Leaving a dog in a car on a warm day is a risk to the dog's life. Remember this saying - "Cars can kill in warm weather".

There are many variables in triggering a dog to experience heat exhaustion; the dog's physical condition, its age, its coat length, its breed, and its climatization to heat. An older, couch-potato, "snuggle the air conditioner" dog will have less tolerance to the heat than a young, romp outside all day, adolescent. Both the very young and very old dogs are among the highest risk categories. All Bulldogs, no matter how well they breath, or how active they are, are at risk from Heat Stroke.

Take the pet's temperature rectally if possible. A normal temperature is between 101-102 degree. A body temperature of about 104 degrees or higher is probable evidence for heat stroke. Place your pet in a tub of cool running water or spray with a hose being sure the cool water contacts the skin and doesn't simply run off the coat. Thoroughly wet the belly and inside the legs. In extreme cases use an ice pack under the neck and front leg pits. Take a rectal temperature if possible to know when to stop cooling. A safe temperature is below 103 degrees to stop the cooling process.

### The first signs of heat exhaustion:

- a) Excessive panting
- b) The skin on the inside of the ears becomes flushed and red.

### Heat Exhaustion can progress in to Heat Stroke, as indicated by:

- a) Weakness
- b) Staggering
- c) Fainting - loss of consciousness

Heat stroke is an emergency situation. If your dog shows signs of heat stroke, you must cool him down as rapidly as possible. Don't wait for veterinary treatment. Heat Stroke is an Emergency - Treat the dog NOW! DO NOT try to force your dog to drink. His swelling airways can cause any liquid he takes in to be regurgitated and possibly aspirated into his lungs. However if a dogs temperature is 105 or higher rub a piece of ice on his tongue, 10 seconds on, 10 seconds off. Hose the dog down with cool water - not cold. Apply an ice pack to the dog, and soaked towels or any other form of fabric to their body.

If at all possible, get him into a tub of cool water -- again, cool - not cold! However, in an extreme emergency if cold is all there is, use it. If none of this is working, a cool water enema can help to cool the dog internally. Be careful not to induce to rapidly, or with water cooler than a few degrees below body temp, or you can put your dog into serious shock. As your dog is panting, his airways are swelling, causing him to pant harder yet again. You need to break this cycle. Children's allergy treatment Benadryl can be administered by mouth from dropper. Consult your vet in advance, or by phone is necessary, for exact dosage. Better still is to obtain a supply of injectable Benadryl to keep on hand. Do not stop treatment until your dog's body temperature is below 103. As soon as the dog's internal temperature has stabilized at a near normal level transport the dog to your vet. Heat stroke can leave permanent damage.

NONE of the above treatments are substitutions for veterinary care -- whenever possible, do take them to the very closest veterinary clinic. Many dogs will play until they drop. You must supervise the games, and determine when it is time to stop. During hot weather limit your dog's time outside! Be sure that there is a shaded area for your dog to rest in and that your dog has a constant supply of clean water. Never, EVER, underestimate your dog's susceptibility to heat stroke. Limit their exposure to temperatures which you might personally find only mildly hot, be conscious of your dog's proximity to hot pavement, NEVER leave your Bulldog in a locked car in even mild weather, and always allow them lots of access to fresh water, shade, and cool areas to escape from heat.

#### Prevention and Preparation:

Of course, the main weapon in prevention of heat stroke is common sense. As we outlined above, be alert to your dog's actions and responses, and be aware of the fact that what may seem like temperate weather for you may be entirely too hot for your dog. Limit activities in hot weather, avoid contact with pavement and concrete, and provide access to shade, fresh water and cooler areas indoors. There are several good cool coats and cool packs on the market to help your dog maintain a lower body temperature. Pet stores carries a full line of cool bandanas, coats, wraps, mats and collars, all made with an absorbent nontoxic polymer crystals that can stay cool for days without needing refrigeration. Take a look at their selection for more information.

#### So what if you have lost power to your home, or the air conditioning has gone out on a hot day?

Follow the cooling procedures above to keep your dog cool. Plenty of fresh water will help. Also you may want to fill a tub 1/3 the way full and allow your dog to rest in it, a cool tile floor will help the dog and you can even spread a bag of ice on the tile floor so they can arrange and adjust to they're desire to keep them cool. You may also get a few buckets of ice and a fan, aim the fan down on the buckets of ice and that will cool the temperature down a great deal in the home, close all windows, bring the shades down over any window in your bathroom to keep the sun out and make it dim in the room, turn fans on, allow the water in the tub to be there and the ice buckets. This will keep things much cooler.

Other possibilities you may want to consider if you are without air conditioning can taking the dog for a ride in an air conditioned car; go to a pet store with your dog and walk around a few hours in the cool store; have your dog boarded at your vet or other boarding places; a police station will usually allow you to sit in the lobby with your dog, go to a friends home or relatives place; ask a co worker to allow your dog to stay for a short time; or rent a hotel room for the night! There are many options to choose from, the main thing is to keep those Bullies cool!