

Missouri German Shepherd Rescue (MoGS) Doggie Health & Wellness Team Wellness Wednesday Series on Canine Health

Preventing Heat Stroke

School is almost out and summer is right around the corner. Time for weekends at the lake, road trips, and neighborhood block parties. It's also that time of the year that we need to be conscious of where we take our furry children and how to recognize signs of heat exhaustion.

Bottom line....it's 10 times easier to prevent heat stroke than to treat it:



- Traveling
 - o If you need to make a quick trip to the store for milk, just leave Fido home
 - "I will only be inside for 5 minutes" can you see the length of the checkout line from your car?
 - "I can leave the car running and the A/C on" unfortunately people love to steal cars with keys left in them and animals left in the vehicle are at risk for being stolen or injured if criminals come lurking for an opportunity.
 - "I will crack the windows and park in the shade" sorry to be the bearer of bad news but the shade just slows the heat from creeping in, and unless the windows are all the way down there is ZERO air movement inside the vehicle.
 - o Road Trips....be mindful of stops along the way
 - Travel with at least one other person, so when nature calls someone can stay in the car with the pets
 - Pack your own cooler with food so you don't have to leave pets in the car for food breaks
 - Pack extra water and a travel bowl for pets to drink from when you do make a stop
 - Don't plan stops along the way to go to the zoo or walk through a museum unless the facility allows pets to go inside with you
 - On a side note.....when traveling with animals make sure they have identification tags on them at all times, a leash attached, and if they are microchipped, make sure the information is up-to-date and carry the microchip number with you.
- Dogs can get heat stroke at home too
 - If outside for extended periods of time make sure there is shade and fresh water available.
 - Daily walks arrange for walks to be done early in the morning or after the sun goes down
 - Night time safety:
 http://www.petmd.com/dog/wellness/evr_dg_staying_safe_while_walking_you_r_dog_at_night
 - If it's been a really hot day, take into consideration how hot the pavement can be if it's too hot for your bare feet, it's probably uncomfortable to your dog
 - Their paw pads can burn and blister.
 - Breeds prone to heat stress: all breeds are susceptible, but BULLDOGS, Pugs, Boxer, Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Boston Terriers, Pekinese, and breeds bred for cold environments (Akita, Husky, American Eskimos, etc) are at higher risk.
 - This is a great article to read before giving your pet the 'summer shave':
 - http://pets.webmd.com/features/shaving-dog-or-cat-during-summer



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Signs of Heat Exhaustion

- Excess panting
- Gasping for breath or posturing on chest to breathe easier
- Gums that are any color but pink (though dogs with heat exhaustion can still have pink gums)
- Extremely high body temperature (it's always a good idea to have a doggie thermometer on hand)
 - Normal is 100-102°F
- Lethargic
- Unwilling to walk or stand
- Vomiting

What do you do if you suspect heat stroke/exhaustion:

- Go to your vet ASAP
- For the trip to the vet
 - Cover them with cool wet towel
 - Wet their paw pads with isopropyl alcohol
- Be prepared to leave the pet with your vet for a few hours, or overnight, so they can monitor temperature, dehydration, do bloodwork to check organ function, and do IV fluids.
 - While the normal body temperature for dogs is below 103°F veterinary staff make sure

to stop the cooling process when they get to the temperature around 104°F because the body temperature will continue to drop once active cooling measures have been stopped.

- ✓ Be Mindful
- ✓ Be Watchful
- ✓ Be Proactive

