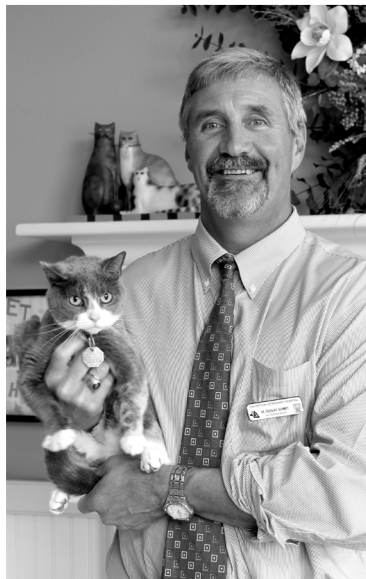


# ASK OUR VET, DR. SCHMIDT



*Dear Dr. Schmidt,*

*The other day I saw a dog locked inside a car in a parking lot. Can't this be harmful to a dog?*

*~ Thank you, Carley*

Absolutely! Hyperthermia, or "heat stroke," is a common consequence that can be fatal to any pet left inside a car when it's warm out. The temperature inside a car can increase by 30-40 degrees within an hour, and 75% of that is within the first 5-10 minutes...even with the windows lowered 2-3 inches!

A dog's body temperature is normally around 101.5 degrees. It can soar to 105° very quickly, which is when serious damage begins to occur. As you may already know, a dog does not sweat through its skin like we do. They get rid of their excess heat by panting and in small amounts through their foot pads. This is obviously not as efficient as our system. This quickly elevates the internal body temperature and starts to injure all the internal systems and organs.

If not stopped quickly, permanent damage or even death may occur.

Signs to look for are excessive panting and salivating, very bright gums/tongue, and of course collapse or unconsciousness.

If you suspect heat stroke, first of all get them out of the heat. Apply cool cloths or lukewarm water to the pet. **DO NOT** use very cold or iced water. This will constrict the blood vessels and prevent the heat from escaping from their body, making things even worse. Put them near a fan, offer water but do not force them to drink, and get them to the vet STAT!

There is no specific treatment for heat stroke itself, except to lower the body temperature, but there may be other internal damages that need immediate attention, like shock, and respiratory, heart, and kidney failure. Sometimes this is reversible, but many times it is not; they may suffer this for the rest of their lives.

Sometimes they even die. This can all happen very rapidly, so time is very, very important in getting them to the vet hospital.

So, Carley, I hope this helps you and others reading this article to understand heat stroke a little better, and hopefully prevent any unnecessary illness or death from a completely preventable condition. Keep cool, and have a great summer.

~Dr. Doug Schmidt



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