

Signs of Heat Exhaustion:

1. A normally active dog flops down on trail or refuses to get up during a change in activity. Failure to obey simple obedience commands (that the dog usually obeys!! e.g., dog's name, "come" etc.),
2. Excessive panting with "bologna tongue"--the tongue comes so far out of the mouth that it flattens and widens and curls up at the end.
3. Intense "brick" red color to insides of ears and mouth (lavender to blue is a very bad sign).
4. Weakness in the legs (hence the "flopping" down); a staggering or drunk-like gait.
- 5.. "Glassy" eyes--a sense that mental function is fading in and out.
6. Collapse followed by runny diarrhea (shock imminent)

What to do:

Some tips on cooling down a hot dog:

1. Cold water (not ice) concentrating on the back of the head (where the brain stem is), on the jugular veins in the neck and between the hind legs--these areas have large superficial veins that will continue to pump hot blood past your cooling water and return cooler blood to the main part of the body.
2. Alcohol (rubbing) repeatedly applied to the foot pads will quickly evaporate for a cooling action.
3. Immerse the entire dog in a cold (not freezing) bath. Avoid leaving in too long--it is possible to drive the temp down too low and send your dog spiraling in the other direction--I usually continue cooling down until the body temp is less than 104 but not below 103.

Temperatures near/greater than 106 are a true emergency and can result in brain damage as well as vascular collapse and shock. When these dogs come in, we start an IV catheter (running the fluid line through a bowl of icy water) and administer acepromazine in *low* IV as a vasodilator while simultaneously setting up the cold bath. Some dogs need IV steroids as well. The vast majority of dogs make it if caught quickly and the temperature is reduced, but some dogs can end up with permanent organ damage.

The shorter-faced breeds of dogs are at particular risk for heat stroke because a large part of the cooling action via panting comes from the passage of hot air through the nasal/mouth passages before entering the lungs and the shorter faced dogs cannot cool this air as efficiently as a dog with a longer snout. I had a client whose pug heatstroked and died in less than 15 minutes outside on a hot humid day--his owner simply put him out in the yard for a few minutes.

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