

# **HIGH TEMPERATURES INCREASE RISK OF HEAT STROKE IN PETS**

With the extreme temperatures we are experiencing in the GTA this summer it is important to remember that this weather can have a very negative impact on the health of our pets. Unfortunately, at the VEC we have been seeing a steady number of sick dogs and cats suffering from heat stroke after being left outside in direct sunlight or in a car.



Heat stroke can occur very rapidly in this hot and humid weather. The greenhouse effect of the car windows causes interior car temperature to escalate quickly.

Leaving dogs, cats and other pets unattended in a car for even a few short minutes could have fatal results, even with a window left open. For this reason it is strongly recommend that pets never be left unattended in vehicles during hot weather or on sunny days.

## **WHAT IS HEAT STROKE?**

Animals do not tolerate high temperatures as well as humans do. Heatstroke occurs when the animal's mechanisms for keeping cool, such as panting to exchange warm air for cool air, are insufficient to counteract high external temperatures, causing the body's temperature to rise. Confinement in an area where temperatures meet or exceed normal body temperatures will cause the animal to overheat. When body temperatures reach more than 41.0 degrees Celsius, cellular function begins to fail, and unconsciousness and even death may follow. Heat stroke is frequently fatal.

## **SIGNS OF HEAT STROKE**

Signs of heat stroke include intense and rapid breathing a bright red tongue, red or pale gums, thick saliva, vomiting, diarrhea, weakness and faintness. In some cases of advanced heat stroke the animal may become unconscious or experience seizures.

## **TREATMENT OF HEAT STROKE**

Time is of the essence when treating heat stroke. IF you suspect heat stroke immediately remove the animal from the heated area and thoroughly wet down the coat and skin with cool (not ice-cold) water, and take your pet directly to your veterinarian.

## **AVOIDING HEAT STROKE**

It is important to be aware of your pet's environment. During times of elevated temperature do not leave them in confined areas, such as cars or out door kennels, or tied up in unshaded areas. Restrict exercise in hot weather and always ensure that there is an adequate supply of water.

**WISHING YOU A SAFE AND HAPPY SUMMER!**