

Heat Stress!

Feeling hot over summer? Well so do your pets.

Heat stress occurs when the body's natural cooling mechanisms can no longer cope with the excessive heat.

All pets suffer from heat stress including caged animals such as rabbits and guinea pigs. Dogs tend to be more susceptible than cats as they tend to over-exert themselves on the hot days.

Heat stress is most likely to occur during hot summer days and usually during the middle of the day when the temperature is at its hottest. However it can also occur during the cooler days.

Pets at increased risk of heat stress include older pets, over weight pets, pets with thicker/longer coats (not shaven), sick/unwell pets, pets with heart/respiratory conditions or pets with "brachycephalic" (short nosed breeds) conditions such as Pugs, Boxers, Bull dogs and Pekinese.

Signs of Heat Stress include:

- ~ distress
- ~ breathing difficulties or breathing rapidly
- ~ panting heavily
- ~ may seem mentally dull
- ~ may drool excessively
- ~ may have red gums

In extreme cases:

- ~ tissue damage
- ~ kidney damage
- ~ heart irregularities
- ~ respiratory arrest
- ~ brain damage
- ~ seizures
- ~ coma
- ~ death



The best way to deal with heat stress is to prevent it from occurring by following these simple steps:

- ~ Make sure there is plenty of fresh cool water around (place water in the shade or under cover)
- ~ Make sure there is ample shade for your pets to shelter under (move hutches under a big tree or inside)
- ~ **DO NOT LEAVE PETS IN CARS EVEN FOR A SHORT TIME.** Car heat up extremely quickly in an extremely short period of time. Pets are just like children!
- ~ Avoid excessive exercise and do not walk your pet during the heat of the day. Either walk them 1st thing in the morning or late at night
- ~ Clip your long/thick pets coat
- ~ Give Rabbits and Guinea Pigs frozen water bottles to lie on or move them inside to a cool room

If you think your pet has heat stress, try to cool them by wetting a towel and placing it over them and then get them to a vet ASAP!