



HEALTHY HYDRATION HELPS DOGS BEAT HEAT STRESS

The dog days of summer don't have to be unbearable. Practicing healthy hydration and understanding the signs of heat stress and how to deal with it can help reduce the dangers of overheating in your active and hardworking dogs.

Keep in mind that dehydration can occur rapidly. Dogs that exercise 30 to 60 minutes at 70 to 80 degrees can experience mild to moderate dehydration, depending on the activity and the intensity. Among the effects of dehydration is an impaired ability to maintain a normal body temperature.

The most common risk to a working dog is an excessive increase in body temperature causing heat stress. The level of crisis ranges from simply making a dog uncomfortable to a life-threatening situation.

Most dogs are very good at controlling their body temperature — *until their temperature goes past a critical level.*

When this happens, even after the dog's temperature is lowered back into the safe range, the dog may experience permanent inability to regulate its body temperature as well as before overheating.

Here are some tips to help you take the heat out of summer.

HYDRATION TIPS

MONITOR A WORKING DOG FOR SIGNS OF HEAT STRESS AND DEHYDRATION

TO SLOW DEHYDRATION, A DOG SHOULD BE GIVEN SMALL AMOUNTS OF WATER EVERY 15 TO 20 MINUTES WHEN WORKING AND ESPECIALLY DURING EVENTS LASTING LONGER THAN 60 MINUTES

TRY COOLING YOUR DOG BY PERIODICALLY SQUIRTING HIM OR HER WITH A SPRAY BOTTLE OR MISTER. THE WETNESS ON THE COAT HAS A COOLING EFFECT AS IT EVAPORATES

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SIGNS OF HEAT STRESS & HEATSTROKE

Heat Stress

- Shade-seeking behavior
- Lethargy
- Heavy panting, possibly with tongue curled up
- Lack of coordination
- Loss of focus & motivation for training
- Squinting of the eyes

Heatstroke

- Distressed & anxious behavior
- Profuse, thick drooling
- Extreme panting
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Gums & tongue may turn dark pink or bright red

IF YOU SUSPECT YOUR DOG HAS OVERHEATED, immediately cool the body using water from a pond, creek, hose, or any other source to help bring down the body temperature. If your dog shows signs of heatstroke, you should take your dog immediately to the veterinarian. A dog with advanced heatstroke may have seizures or slip into a coma. The effects of heatstroke can continue for 48 to 72 hours even if a dog appears normal, so it is important for a veterinarian to evaluate a dog for damage to the liver and kidneys and any other health problems.