

### KEEPING IT COOL ON HOT DAYS

Warm days are here! Cool? That's the word on every pet lover's mind, because keeping pets cool is not just kind, it's **crucial**.

When the temperature rises, all pets are at risk for heat stroke whether they are left in a car, set in a cage in direct sunlight, or even wrapped in a towel for too long, a common method used to restrain birds.

Some pets are particularly susceptible. Members of brachycephalic breeds—those with a “pushed-in” appearance—are inefficient at panting. Brachycephalic breeds include Himalayan and Persian cat, Boston Terrier, Boxer, English Bulldog, Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Lhasa Apso, Pekingese, Chinese Shar Pei, and Shih Tzu.



Obese pets, too, are at risk, as are those dogs and cats with a thick hair coat. Those with underlying lung or heart disease also face increased danger.

The problem is that dogs, cats, rabbits, and birds don't sweat as we do. They get rid of excess heat by panting, and sweating through their feet.

What happens to them when they experience rising temperatures? A dog, cat, or other small animal may pant and drool. Their gums and tongue turn dark or red. Their heart rate rises. Their breaths come faster. They are agitated, weak, and may collapse. From there, heat stroke can cause seizures, coma, or even death.

Not cool. Cruel! So what do you need to do to keep your pet safe and to avoid such awful situations? Here are some tips.

Never leave your pet unattended in a vehicle. Forget cracking the window. It won't make a difference. And don't count on your air conditioning—the units can fail, killing pet passengers.

It's shocking to learn just how quickly temperatures rise inside a vehicle. A study in a 2005 issue of *PEDIATRICS* found that, on sunny days, even when the ambient temperature is mild or relatively cool, there is rapid, significant heating of vehicle interiors.

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The study noted that on days when the ambient temperature was **72 degrees**, the internal vehicle temperature could reach **117 degrees within 60 minutes**. Eighty percent of the temperature rise occurred in the first 30 minutes.

In general, after 60 minutes, one can expect a 40-degree increase in internal temperatures for ambient temperatures spanning 72 to 96 degrees, putting children and pets at significant risk. We also determined that cracking open windows is **not effective** in decreasing either the rate of heat rise or the maximum temperature attained.

Cooling the vehicle before you turn off the AC? The study found that a vehicle consistently reached ambient temperatures within five minutes of the AC being turned off and then would heat up at a similar rate to non-air-conditioned cases. So “pre-cooling” with the A/C only buys you 5-minutes.

Keep your pet hydrated. Make sure the water container is full of clean, cool water and that it cannot be knocked over.

Keep your house or apartment cool. Close the drapes to keep out the sun. Turn on the air conditioning. If you're A/C is broken and there's a breeze, open windows for cross ventilation. If there is no breeze, turn on fans.

Do not make your pet exercise or play. Put off any “fun” routines until the weather is more accommodating.

Keep birds and small animals out of the sun. Make sure the cages for your birds or pocket pets are out of any sunlight streaming through the windows.

Keep your bunny cool. Make sure the room your rabbit is in has shade. A circulating fan will help cool the room, but make sure the fan cord is protected so the rabbit cannot chew on it. A ceramic tile on the floor can make for a cool place to rest.

Keep your dog's coat groomed and trimmed. Don't shave or trim your dog unless you first talk with us. A coat can keep a dog warm in winter and may actually keep it cooler in summer and prevent sunburn.

If you suspect your pet is overheated, provide them with small amounts of cool water or ice cubes to lick, get them in the shade, and stop exercising. Apply cool, wet cloths to the feet and around the head. Get your pet in to us or the nearest Animal Emergency Center ASAP even if they seem OK after cooling down.