

July Newsletter 2009

Heatstroke & Heat Stress

Summers in Idaho are hot and extremely dry. Dogs with heavy coats, overweight dogs and older dogs are at greater risk from the effects of the heat. If a dog cannot get cool either from excess heat exposure or lack of water intake they are at risk for heat stress or worse yet: heatstroke.

Signs of heatstroke or heat stress include (in order of severity):

- 1) excessive panting
- 2) lethargy
- 3) dark or very red gums
- 4) dry gums
- 5) Body temperature $\geq 106.0^{\circ}\text{F}$
- 6) loss of coordination
- 7) acute blindness
- 8) seizures

If your dog exhibits any of these symptoms, please attempt to cool your dog down with cool water. Ice or cold packs can cool them too quickly actually leading to hypothermia. If your dog shows symptoms more severe than excess panting or lethargy please start to cool then down and seek veterinary care immediately. **Heatstroke can be life threatening!**

To prevent risks of heatstroke, we recommend the following:

- 1) Provide plenty of fresh, easily-accessible cool water for your dog
- 2) Provide shady areas or keep in an air conditioned building
- 3) Exercise at the cooler times of the day (morning is usually best)
- 4) If your dog has a heavy coat, consider a body clip or shave down