

Heat Can Be Deadly for Dogs (and people)

High temperatures are potentially dangerous or even deadly for pets. Rancho Coastal Humane Society spokesman John Van Zante says, "Heat can be especially dangerous for pets, kids, and seniors. Take a few simple precautions and you could save a life."

Temperatures inside closed vehicles can rise as much as 30 degrees in less than 5 minutes. In the time it takes to go into a store and buy a loaf of bread, the temperature in your vehicle can go from comfortable to deadly.

Owners don't recognize the symptoms, and the longer they wait the higher the risk of organ damage or death. "Dogs don't sweat. They pant. When they can't pant fast enough it can cause **heat exhaustion**. Symptoms include diarrhea, nausea and vomiting, rapid panting, and a reddening of the skin inside the ears. If this occurs, take your dog to a cool place and offer it sips (not drinks) of water. Dampen the dog with lukewarm water. This should cool it down.

If you discover the symptoms too late or the initial treatment isn't enough your dog could suffer **heat stroke**. "Organs will start shutting down. If that happens, get emergency veterinary care! Your dog may seem disoriented and walk like it's drunk. Other symptoms include Confusion, Drooling, Dry gums, Lethargy, Loss of consciousness, Rapid heartbeat, Rectal bleeding, Refusal to drink, and a Body temperature of 105 degrees or higher.

If you believe your dog is suffering from heat stroke, hose it down with cool (not cold) water then rush him to the nearest vet (even if it's not your regular vet.) If its temperature stays above 105 degrees, damage to the major organs (brain, heart, kidneys, liver) occurs.

Van Zante adds, "We're not trying to cause panic. But it's important to know what to do if your dog overheats. Quick action could save its life."

Rancho Coastal Humane Society is located at 389 Requeza Street in Encinitas. For more information log on to www.sdpets.org or call 760-753-6413.