

Pet Talk

THREE NOTCH VETERINARY HOSPITAL
PARK VETERINARY CLINIC

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PREVENT YOUR PET FROM HEAT STROKE

While people are smart enough to know the risks of hot temperatures and take the necessary precautions to avoid becoming overheated, we sometimes forget to consider our animals needs. Heat stroke can be a life threatening condition for anyone including animals. This article will focus on the risk factors signs, treatment, and prevention of heat stroke in animals.

Animals are at an increased risk for heat stroke if they are very old or very young, overweight, not used to being outside for long periods of time, not conditioned for prolonged exercise, or if they have heart, respiratory, or neurological diseases. Certain breeds, such as the English Bulldog, French Bulldog, Pug, Boston Terrier and others are more prone to heat stroke, due to the structure of their head and neck. Animals that have had problems with heat stroke previously are at risk for recurrence. In addition, animals on certain types of medications, including diuretics like Lasix, are at an increased risk for heat stroke.

Certain environmental conditions increase the incidence of heat stroke. Obviously, the higher the temperature the greater the risk. Relative humidity also plays a critical role. A higher relative humidity can predispose to heat stroke. For example, if it were 85 degrees outside, there would be a much higher risk for heat stroke if the humidity were 75% versus if the humidity were only 20%. Lack of shade, water and poor ventilation are other environmental factors that can increase the risk for heat stroke.

Animals with heat stroke will generally have a high body temperature. Normal body temperature for many of the common domestic species is about 100-102 degrees. In heat stroke, animals can experience body temperatures as great as 109 degrees. Temperatures at this level are life threatening. Brain damage can occur at temperatures above 106 degrees.

Panting, bright red gums weakness, increased heart rate, lethargy, stupor, seizures, coma, vomiting, and diarrhea can occur. Liver, kidney, and heart problems can all result as well.

Since heat stroke can be fatal, quick medical attention is critical. The main goal of treatment for heat stroke is to reduce the body temperature to a more appropriate level while avoiding over cooling. Body temperature can be decreased by placing towels that have been soaked in cold water on the animal, moving the animal to a cooler environment, using fans to help cool the animal, etc. IV fluid and other medications may be necessary to help stabilize the animal as well. Frequent temperature checks are necessary to assure that the body temperature does not fall below normal.

As with many things, prevention is your best defense against heat stroke. When it is hot out or when there is a high relative humidity, try to minimize the amount of time animals stay outside. If an animal must be outside for long periods of time, assure that there is adequate shade and water available. Avoid intense exercise during the hottest part of the day. And most importantly, if your animals are outside on humid days, monitor them frequently for the signs of heat stroke so that you can intervene quickly, if necessary.



LEAVE ME HOME ON HOT DAYS

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**CHECK OUT PAGE 2
FOR INFORMATION ON
APVES, our partner emergency
facility, located in :**

**Calvert County
Allied Partners Veterinary
Emergency Services**

Special points of interest:

- * High temperatures can cause brain damage
- * A car's temperature can reach 120 F in a matter of minutes on a hot day
- * HEAT STROKES CAN BE PREVENTED!

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Mission Statement
Service Numbers
Office Hours
Available on our website
www.threenotch.com



Links for both locations available on our website...www.threenotch.com

EMERGENCY SERVICES

ALLIED PARTNERS VETERINARY EMERGENCY SERVICES

Three Notch Veterinary Hospital and Park Veterinary Clinic provide after hours emergency services through our partner emergency service, Allied Partner Veterinary Emergency Services.

APVES is located just north of Prince Frederick, Maryland in Huntingtown. APVES has emergency hours weekdays: 6PM-8AM, weekends and holidays: 24 hours.

You may reach them by calling:

410.535.9722

To learn more about APVES visit their website

www.vetmash.com/APVES



Obedience Corner

Ask the Trainer!

In this edition of Obedience Corner, we're kicking off a new series called "Ask the Trainer." I do a lot of training and behavior consulting but I also spend time just answering questions. Some questions are easy (Q: Why does my puppy urinate on the floor?) while some questions are more complicated (Q: Why does my dog bark at other dogs while walking on a leash?). For this segment, I asked some fellow dog owners to send me questions and they sent me some doozies! My email address is listed below and if you have any questions that you would like me to answer, send them in and we'll pick a few to highlight in this column.

Q: I have a new dog and he's getting big and he jumps a lot. I'm afraid he may hurt the kids by jumping on them. How do I stop this? Thanks, Kerstin.

A: Hi Kerstin. This is a pretty common problem and it's actually pretty easy to stop. For any behavior we want to change, we need to follow these steps in order: (1) prevent opportunities for the unwanted behavior from occurring in the first place, (2) reward good behaviors to replace the unwanted behaviors, and (3) punish the unwanted behavior when it does occur.

For jumping, step (1) is preventing opportunities for the dog to jump on people. The easiest way to do this is with a leash. When a dog is on a leash, it becomes very easy to keep the dog from jumping kids, visitors, or you. The trick is to get into the habit of using the leash indoors as well as outside until the jumping habit gets replaced with "good dog" behavior.



Step (2) is to reward behaviors you like that gets the dog what he wants...your attention. If you spend 5-10 minutes each day giving your dog treats for sitting, he'll become a compulsive "sitter". Over time, you can use the sit command in the situations when the dog normally jumps.

Step (3) is the punishment step. If you've been following my logic, you see that if the owner performs steps (1) and (2) correctly and consistently, you'll never need step (3). If you do need it, the best punishment for jumping is to take away what the dog wants. Dogs that jump typically want our attention and/or physical contact. Some dogs seek that attention and contact even when it's rough like knees to the chest or pushing them down or yelling. Instead, do the opposite. Keep quiet, turn away from the dog, and pull your arms and hands up tightly to your chest. When I show kids how to do this, I say "Be a tree!" and they normally get it faster than mom and dad. When we do this, the dog will normally come around to your front and try to jump again. If you repeat this, the dog will eventually do something else (like sit) or get bored and walk away. If they are stubborn, go back to step (1)...get the leash.

Thanks for your question Kerstin. I hope this helps.

Obedience Corner

Q: I've heard that dogs have an excellent sense of time and I've also heard that dogs have no sense of time; that they live completely in the present. Which is true? Mark.

A: I can always count on Mark for a tough question. I did a little research because for topics like these, we need to avoid intuition. Owners (and experts) have a tendency to convey human characteristics to dogs when they don't apply (anamorphism) and that gets us into trouble. To combat this tendency, true behaviorist and scientists will conduct controlled experiments and observations to evaluate these characteristics objectively. The topic of time as it applies to dogs is complex but I'll try to provide some examples and some context.

"Time" by itself is pretty abstract. What gives it meaning to us (and dogs) are the concepts of past, present, and future. Scientists have conducted experiments to investigate a dog's sense of past, present, and future that are very similar to what owners see every day. Example: A young dog who has never seen an aggressive dog



is exposed (safely) to an aggressive dog just once. Some days later, the same two dogs are exposed to each other and the subject dog responds with caution. Why? (1) The subject dog remembers the aggressive dog (the past) and (2) he can predict what this dog may do (the future). This response has nothing to do with conditioning or learned behavior because the subject dog was only exposed to an aggressive dog once and there was no repeated exposure that would condition or "teach" this new behavior. There is also very little evidence that this type of complex behavior is instinctual because the young dog didn't recognize the aggression during their first meeting. There are many other examples of dogs understanding of past, present, and future, but they are not always so straight-forward. Passage of time is a different story. Can a dog "tell time" or do they understand that an hour has passed instead of 15 minutes. Not really, but it can appear that way. Dogs are keenly aware of patterns in their environment and they use these patterns to predict the future. The brightness or dimness of the room (sun) or the distant sound of your car can indicate when you're coming home from work. When our dogs are on really good eating, drinking, and eliminating schedules, we say they are like "clockwork" because you can almost set your watch by their potty habits.

Dogs use these same cues to tell us when it's dinner time. For more information, I can recommend some good books (if you send me more questions!).

Q: Why does my one dog bark at the TV but my other dog doesn't seem to even notice we own a TV?

A: It's for the same reason I'll watch a Star Wars marathon (over and over again) but my wife only rolls her eyes. One of us is interested and one of us is not. :-D

I hope you enjoyed this Q&A and I look forward to receiving your questions. In the future, we'll still have full length articles but will add a question to "Ask the Trainer." Send your questions to

Ask the Trainer –

training@dogboyobedience.com

UNTIL NEXT TIME, ENJOY YOUR SUMMER

AND

HAPPY TRAINING!



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