



CANINE HEAT STROKE

"In the upcoming eight weeks, countless cases of canine heat stroke are likely to be presented to area veterinarians," said Dr. Linda Barton, Diplomat, ACVECC and Head of The AMC's Emergency Critical Care Service,

Citing a recent paper in *The Journal of Veterinary Internal Medicine* 2006;20:38-46 based on research at the Hebrew University School of Veterinary Medicine in Jerusalem, Barton identified risk factors for the development of heat stroke in dogs. She added that overall mortality in the **JVIM** study was 50%, and that dogs experiencing seizures, hypoglycemia, disseminated intravascular coagulation and azotemia, had an increased risk of death from heat stroke.

Because of these recommendations, and as a service to referring veterinarians, The Animal Medical Center is passing on these helpful tips to share with your clients during the hot months ahead.

- **Come to the hospital immediately when a dog collapses.**
The amount of time from collapse to admission resulted in more cases of disseminated intravascular coagulation.
- **Cool your dog off only if it will not delay arrival at a veterinary hospital.**
Dogs cooled by owners did not have a better prognosis.
- **Take extra precautions with overweight dogs on hot, humid days.**
Overweight dogs had a case fatality rate double that of normal weight dogs. Develop a weight loss plan with your veterinarian to benefit your pet's health long term.
- **If you have a bulldog, pug, shar pei, Pekinese or other brachycephalic breed, limit their outdoor access on hot, humid days.**
The short nose of these dogs may not allow adequate cooling on the hottest summer days. These breeds were twice as likely to develop heat stroke compared to other dogs seen at the same hospital.
- **Although large breed dogs, such as golden or Labrador retrievers, rottweilers and English bulldogs, need a lot of exercise, chose exercise times when the heat and humidity are low.**
These dogs were twice as likely to develop heat stroke compared to other dogs seen at the same hospital and heat stroke occurred more frequently when the discomfort index exceeded the average for a given day. Discomfort index is a measure of heat and humidity.

For additional information on managing heat stroke, Barton urged referring veterinarians to see the June 2006 issue of *The Journal of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care*, which has an excellent review on heat stroke pathophysiology and treatment.