

Rising temperatures can be hard on dogs

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Leaving a dog unattended in a vehicle on a hot day can be dangerous to the dog's health, according to a Kansas State University veterinarian.

The "dog days of summer" are here, but don't let the phrase fool you. This hot time of year can be dangerous for your pup, says a Kansas State University veterinarian.

"As it starts to get hot, the risk of [heat exhaustion](#) or death from heat stroke increases," said Susan Nelson, clinical associate professor in the department of clinical sciences at the university's Veterinary Health Center.

Leaving your dog unattended in a hot car can be deadly. Nelson says if temperatures are around 80 degrees Fahrenheit or above, your pets shouldn't be left in the car. Cracking the windows doesn't let in enough cool air and the temperature inside the car can soar to more than 100 degrees in just a matter of minutes.

Even walking your dog at this time of year can be dangerous. If your dog is lagging behind, panting excessively or has saliva thicker than usual, it's time to cool off your canine, Nelson said.

"If you continue to push your dog and its internal temperature rises, it's going to get weaker and more wobbly," Nelson said. "The dog may start to seizure and even become unconscious as symptoms progress. Those high temperatures will shut down the internal organs, which can be fatal when a dog overheats that much. Even if you get the dog to a veterinary clinic, it may be too late."

For minor overheating, you can cool your dog off by wetting it down with water and letting it rest in the shade. You also can turn a fan on the dog or put it in an air-conditioned car. To avoid heat exhaustion, walk your dog during the coolest parts of the day, such as early morning or late evening.

If your dog is experiencing more severe symptoms of heat exhaustion, wet him down with water and get him to a veterinarian immediately—as timely treatment is imperative in trying to reverse any damage the heat has done to the dog's body. While driving to the veterinarian, directing your car's air vents toward your dog while it is wet will also aide in the cooling process.

A dog's tolerance of heat varies depending on its breed and age, Nelson said. Elderly [dogs](#) and puppies can't regulate their body temperatures as well, so they will have a harder time coping with the heat. Dogs with

shorter snouts, like boxers and pugs, already have difficulty breathing, making them more susceptible to the effects of heat.

"These breeds already have compromised airwaves, so when they're panting heard because of the heat, it starts to cause swelling of the tissues in their throat," Nelson said. "They then can't move the air very well and they can quickly succumb to the effects of [heat stroke](#)."

A little bit of panting is normal, but it's important to keep an eye on your four-legged friend to make sure they aren't overdoing it, Nelson said.

Provided by Kansas State University

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