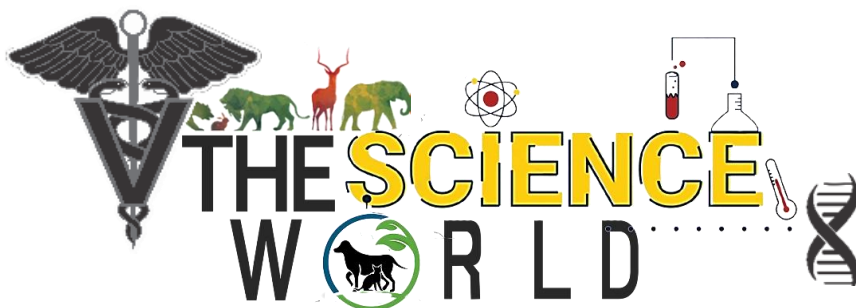




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## Keeping Your Pets Cool: Managing Heat Stress in Summer

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### Abstract

Summer heat stress in pets occurs when high temperatures and humidity exceed their ability to thermoregulate, posing life-threatening risks. Heatstroke develops in hyperthermic condition and causes organ failure and death. Most susceptible populations include brachycephalic breeds, overweight, geriatric, juvenile animals, and patient with cardiac or respiratory conditions. In India, environmental risk factors such as high temperatures and humidity increase the susceptibility of animals to heatstroke. Early recognition of heat stress is critical for survival. The recommended first aid follows a "cool first, transport second" approach. Immediately moving animal to cool, well-ventilated areas, offering small sips of water, pouring moderate cold water over the head and soak paws, and transporting to veterinary care for fluid therapy and monitoring can save their life. For prevention, provide fresh water with ice cubes, ensure their access to cool shady spots, schedule outdoor activities during early morning or post-sunset hours, regular grooming to remove mats in hair. During India's hot humid months (May-June), power cuts are very common, with simple methods like using wet towels, fixing early morning/evening outdoor time, and providing fresh water and shade with fans, we can prevent heat-related emergencies without requiring expensive equipment.

**Key Words-** Pets, Heat Stroke, Organ Failure, Well Ventilated, Grooming, Fresh Water.

### Introduction

Summer heat stress in animals occurs when high temperatures and humidity overwhelm their ability to cool down. This heat stress can more dangerous in pet and pets cannot sweat like humans; they primarily cool themselves through panting and their paw pads. A high temperature, combined with thick coats, makes them highly susceptible to life-threatening heatstroke and in heat stroke and body temperature increases to a point where serious consequences, including organ failure and even death may occur. Brachycephalic breeds (pugs, bulldogs, Persians), overweight pets, geriatric animals, puppies/kittens, thick-coated animals, and those with heart or lung issues are most vulnerable for heat strokes. To protect our furry friends, limit outdoor activities to cooler hours, ensure constant access to



fresh water and provide quiet, air-conditioned spaces away from seasonal noises.

### **Why Pets Overheat and How to Prevent It**

Summer doesn't always have to be 'hot' for an animal to develop heatstroke. Exercising excessively in warm weather or being left in a warm or humid environment that is poorly ventilated can cause animals to quickly overheat. In India, top-floor flats, sunny balconies, and afternoon heat traps amplify risks, also high humidity can make indoors feel just like outdoors. Avoidance is always best, but it's important to know the signs of heatstroke so that you can treat your pet appropriately and know when to seek veterinary attention should they be unfortunate enough to suffer from it.

### **Spotting Heat Stress Early**

Signs can be subtle and overlap, but early intervention can save lives of many pets and this can be done via recognizing the early signs of heat stress and upcoming strokes.

#### **Early Signs**

- Panting -It becomes noisy as it worsens.
- Restlessness, pacing, seeking shade and water.
- Drooling, red/sticky gums/tongue.
- Increased heart rate.
- Vomiting, diarrhoea.

#### **Advanced Signs**

- Excessive panting or drooling, unsteadiness, lethargy.
- Tremors or seizures
- Confusion
- Poor coordination.
- Weakness/collapse

### **First Aids for heatstroke in cats and dogs**

If your pet is overheating, you should adopt appropriate measure immediately to manage heat stroke as heatstroke can rapidly become a life-threatening emergency in pet animals. We recommend to "cool first, transport second" as the immediate first aid response for dogs with heatstroke. Only 22% of cases use optimal methods like immersion/evaporation, wet towels are common but less effective. Following measures should be adopted by pet parents immediately for managing heat stroke in pets.

- I. Take your pet immediately at cool and ideally a well-ventilated area
- II. Offer small sips of water (do not force them to drink)
- III. Young/healthy pets: Immerse in cool water.
- IV. Evaporative cooling-pour cool water over head, soak paws in cool water, moderate cold water creates a better thermal gradient than ice without causing severe vasoconstriction or shocking the system.
- V. Transport to veterinary care as tests, fluid therapy may be needed.



Early recognition and prompt initiation of these measures can help to reduce the risks of any serious consequences.

### **Tips Prevention of heat stress in Pets**

- Always provide fresh, clean water, add ice cubes on hot days. Use multiple bowls and place away from food/litter.
- Ensure constant access to cool, shady spots indoors/outdoors like tiles, fans, coolers or AC work best. Curtains, better airflow, and picking the house's coolest room during peak heat can also help.
- Schedule outdoor time early morning or post-sunset only. Skip hottest hours, especially for older and overweight pets, brachycephalic breeds or those with health issues.
- Never leave pets in parked cars, not even in shaded with windows down.
- Groom regularly: Brush to remove mats or loose fur. Limit baths to lukewarm, stroke paws/ears with damp cloths or towel-wrapped ice.
- Don't shave fully as this hairy coat keeps them away from overheating in the summer, it also protects animal's skin from sun damage. It's better to trim hair to make hair more manageable and to provide relief from excessive heat. Trimming can be done with leaving upto 1 inch hair length in long haired breeds.
- For working pets, it's better to avoid peak heat work, give water breaks, shade kennels and vehicles and ensure airflow.
- Boost hydration via wet food or moistened kibble.
- Cool floors are better than bedding.

### **Conclusion**

May and June in India are hot and humid, and power cuts are common. To make pets feel comfortable, we should adjust our homes and routines. You don't need expensive equipment, take pets outside early in the morning or late in the evening, make sure they always have fresh water, check hair coat for ticks and fungus and give them shady spots with a fan when possible. If there's a power cut, wet towels can help. Pets with flat faces, older pets, and those with heart problems need extra care. Keep pets out of the sun, offer more water, and visit the vet quickly if something seems wrong. This can help prevent emergencies.

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