

Heat stress can be very harmful and lead to severe illness and even death of affected animals. Prevention is the key to combat heat stress.

First keep your animals cool during the warmer months. Make sure outdoor pets and animals have access to shade and a continuous supply of cool water in containers that cannot be tipped over.

Animals kept indoors need to have good ventilation and air movement through the barn by using fans and leaving windows and doors open.

Do not leave an animal in a parked car. When the outside temperature is 85°F, the inside of a vehicle can quickly reach 120°F, even in the shade with the windows cracked.

If you travel with your pet in the car, make sure the animal is properly restrained while the vehicle is moving. Pets need to keep their heads inside the vehicle and should not ride in the bed of a truck.

If you jog with your pet, keep in mind that over exertion in hot weather can easily cause overheating, especially in humid weather. Even if a dog is in excellent shape and jogs daily with you in cooler weather, in the summer a pet can easily overheat.

Signs of overheating or heat stress may include elevated body temperature and heart rate, increased breathing rate, nostril flaring, staring and unresponsive, staggering, seizures, diarrhea or vomiting.

If heat exhaustion occurs, move the animal to a cooler area or in the shade. Begin to sponge the animal down and call your veterinarian immediately.

This column is provided by the faculty of the OSU Veterinary Hospital. The large volume of questions does not allow us to directly respond to specific email questions so please watch for your answer in the column. Email your questions for the column to [dvmoncall@postoffice.cvhs.okstate.edu](mailto:dvmoncall@postoffice.cvhs.okstate.edu) and watch for your answer.

###