

Panting pooches: when summer heat is too much for your dog

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Summer is a great time to enjoy the outdoors with your dog, but when the temperatures spike or the fireworks come out, it's time to make sure your furry best friend is having just as good a time as you are.

When a [heat wave](#) rolls in, try to only take your dog for walks in the coolest hours of the day, advised Mark Freeman, a veterinarian and clinical assistant professor of community practice at Virginia Tech's Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine.

If the pup is staying outside, make sure they have shade, access to water and that their water bowl is full when they return home, he added.

"One of the biggest things that most owners don't understand is that it's not just [heat](#); you have heat and humidity," Freeman said, and small dog owners need to be especially aware of this. Breeds with short snouts are even more vulnerable to the heat because their mouths are usually too small to offer effective heat relief by panting, Freeman

explained.

If you think your dog may be suffering from [heat exhaustion](#), look out for some key symptoms, including:

- Sudden exhaustion or weakness
- Diarrhea and/or vomiting
- Excessive panting
- A change in gum color from pink to dark red or purple
- Seizures and sudden collapse

If your dog has any of these symptoms, Freeman advises you immediately move them to a shaded area or indoors. Offer them [cold water](#), and call your veterinarian. They may be able to provide more timely advice.

Under no circumstances should you leave your animal in the car on a hot day, even if the windows are cracked. Just a couple of minutes can turn into a lethal situation, Freeman said.

Other hallmarks of summer can prove overwhelming or stressful to your dog, like fireworks or a thunderstorm. Roughly one-third of all dogs suffer from noise anxiety when it comes to sudden, spontaneous sounds.

"When they are in a situation where they are being bombarded with noises that are causing a tremendous amount of stress for them, they are looking for any source of security, and that includes a 'safe' hiding place," Freeman said in a Virginia Tech news release.

If your dog is especially freaked out, or exhibits a [phobia](#), there are a few different things you can try to do to help.

"A general rule is to approach any phobia through behavior modification therapy, if that's an option,

desensitizing animals to the [loud noises](#) so they pretty much ignore them," he said.

Other alternatives include sedatives, such as Sileo, an oral gel that is absorbed through the dog's gums, Freeman said. These can help your furry companion relax in the event of a thunderstorm or unavoidable fireworks.

More information: Visit the U.S. National Weather Service for more on [how to keep your dog cool](#).

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