

# HEAT EXHAUSTION

## Heat - A Killer

**Heat will kill your dog!** If it's been hot, please use common sense and good judgment when you take your dog out in the heat. Greyhounds, because of their lack of fat and hair, don't have the insulation other dogs have to the heat. They need to be in a controlled temperature environment of 68 - 72 degrees. The following are some guidelines.

### WATER

Water, water, water

- **Water** - Always have water in the car and with you on walks.
- **Ice** - Take a thermos full of ice with you
- **Squirt Bottle** - Bring a squirt bottle filled with cold, ice water everywhere you go. Squirt your greyhound often. Wet his coat, his ears, his legs and belly.
- **Cool Coats** - Using a terry cloth towel, wet it and drape it over your greyhound. You can also use a dog coat pattern and make one for your greyhound. But you **must not** let this coat get hot, or it traps in the heat, vs cooling the dog down, so, **it must be dipped in cool water frequently.**
- **Pools** - greyhounds love to sit in wading pools. They think they are the epitome of cool played out in these kiddie pools, staying cool!

### Activities

- **Walks** - the best time is early morning. Street pavements are cooler and so is the air temperature. Do **NOT** walk your greyhound during the day, or even early evenings. Pavements are very hot, and it's been a full day of heat. With that said, if your greyhound is like mine, and won't eliminate unless walked, find a very shaded area and walk him just enough to get him to go. Make sure you have the water and squirt bottle with you if he takes a while to eliminate. Once you get back to your car, turn the air conditioner on in your car to cool your dog down.
- Keep your greyhound indoors with air conditioning at all times.  
No traveling without air conditioning - ever!
- Monitor your greyhound's play at all times during hot weather. They may not know when enough is enough. Put the sprinkler system on when they are playing, this will help to keep them cool.
- If they appear hot, hose them down, or apply wet towels around the belly and between the legs.  
**Be safe, not sorry.**

### Heat Exhaustion Signs

- Excessive panting; Skin on inside of ears becomes flushed and red; Weakness; Walk becomes wobbly; Fainting.
- Quick action can save your dog's life, if you've allowed him to reach any of these signs. Get cool water on him - **all over him** - anyway you can. I take cotton towels, and wet them down, and keep putting them all over the dog. Keep the clothes cool. Do not let them get hot and stay on the body.  
*Then get to a vet!*
- **Driving**  
Fact - on an 85-degree day, with windows open, your car can reach 102 degrees in 10 minutes and 120 degrees in 30 minutes.
- If you take your greyhound, then also take an extra set of keys, so you can keep the air conditioner on. **NEVER** leave your greyhound in a car in this heat.

## Info from Lure Coursing People

Heat is lost from a body by evaporation, radiation and convection (mass transfer). Sweating cools you by evaporation. Glowing white hot and cooling to red hot would cool something by radiation - this is not particularly applicable to most animals as we know them. However black animals re-radiate heat better than white animals.

Being submerged in cold water, having a breeze blow on you or having water from a hose run over you are all ways of having convective cooling.

If it is very humid, like it is here in Florida in the summer, then evaporative cooling is relatively ineffective and **convective cooling becomes the most important mode.**

Dogs do not sweat to cool off. They get rid of heat by panting and submerging in water. After they submerge they can get out of the water and lose heat as the water evaporates but they will need to submerge again to restore a water film once they dry off.

The ability to generate heat is proportional to the dog's body mass

The ability to cool off is proportional to surface areas: tongue, ears, inside of mouth, lung surface, legs and the rest of the body.

Since mass increases geometrically but surface area increases arithmetically larger and bulkier dogs overheat MUCH more easily than smaller and thinner dogs. In practical terms, if you have a **large dog** or a hairy dog just misting its coat with a spray of water from a mister on a hot humid day is NOT going to cool the dog off. Neither is allowing him to drink a lot of water.

The dog needs to be submerged or hosed down and it needs to be in the shade. If the dog has just run it should be walked to aid in cooling but this does not substitute for hosing down or submerging. Since dogs obtain a fair amount of evaporative cooling through heavy panting the dog's mouth can be moistened.

A hot dog should not stand around in a muzzle. The muzzle can seriously interfere with panting. Dogs in heat stroke may feel clammy to the touch. While going into heatstroke they may produce copious quantities of thick, ropery saliva. Seizures can be a consequence of heat stroke.

**Dogs are more sensitive to heat and high humidity than humans.** A situation that may be merely very uncomfortable for you may kill your dog.

Dogs take longer to acclimate to climatic changes involving increased heat and humidity than people and they will lose that acclimation over a period of cool weather. Just because your Greyhound was fine last summer does not mean that you can take it out and run it for the first time THIS year at a July trial in Florida!

Judges at lure coursing events should keep in mind that the larger and faster breeds are much more susceptible to heat stroke than small breeds and deport themselves accordingly in relation to reruns and starting courses over.

Hot weather dry climate trials (as in the summer in Colorado) are not particularly hard on the dogs. **It is the humidity that kills.**

Dogs can get heat stroke in 80 degree weather if it is humid enough.

Modified from Greyhound Gang's Website