

Press release: 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2019

## **Walking flat-faced dogs at any time of day during hot weather could end in tragedy, warn vets**

### **Only 50% of dogs with heat stroke will survive**

VETS have issued a plea to flat-faced dog owners to avoid over-exercising their pets while the UK basks in a sweltering heatwave.

French bulldogs, Boston terriers, pugs, and other brachycephalic breeds are particularly badly affected during hot weather.

They can struggle for breath and are more at risk of overheating, typically as a result of problems caused by extreme breeding.

Now, with temperatures set to soar, pet emergency experts [Vets Now](#) are warning owners of the popular breeds which should avoid rigorous exercise at any time.

Dr Laura Playforth, veterinary standards director at Vets Now said: "In some areas, temperatures are unlikely to drop below 18°C over the next few days.

"Even at these temperatures, flat-faced breeds and dogs that are obese or suffering from conditions that affect the upper airway are at risk of heat stroke when exercised outside.

"We see a lot of heat stroke cases when temperatures rise and some end in tragic circumstances. I'd urge all pet owners to educate themselves on the dangers of heat stroke and hyperthermia."

Heat stroke in dogs is essentially a high temperature not caused by a fever. It occurs when dogs are no longer able to self-regulate and keep their temperature at a comfortable level.

The average survival rate of a dog diagnosed with heat stroke is just 50% and Vets Now sees a big increase in heat stroke admissions during hot spells.

Bulldog Blossom was left fighting for her life after her body temperature soared to a life-threatening 42°C during a warm day.

Owner Emma Darlington thought Blossom had suffered a coronary seizure and rushed her to Vets Now in Salisbury, Wiltshire, where she was kept in overnight.



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Emma, who's from Salisbury, said: "Blossom was having a great time chasing a black Labrador and I think she just over-cooked herself. It was a warm day but it was by no means the heat of the midday sun.

"She was panting and gasping for breath. Then her tongue turned blue and started going darker and darker. It was an extremely scary situation to witness. I genuinely thought she had suffered a coronary."

Heat stroke is a major factor to consider when out and about in the heat and sunshine with your dog, and it only takes a 2°C body temperature increase for heat stroke to kick in.

The illness occurs when dogs are no longer able to self-regulate and keep their temperature down, according to Vets Now, the UK's leading provider of pet emergency veterinary care.

Dr Playforth added: "There are two types of heat stroke — exertional and non-exertional.

"The first occurs during exercise and is much more common on hot sunny days, when dogs haven't had a chance to acclimatise to the sudden rise in heat.

"The second type is when a dog is exposed to a notable rise in temperature but doesn't have access to the ventilation, or drinking water, they need to keep themselves cool. This typically occurs in a parked car, a garden with no shade, or a very hot room.

"All dogs can overheat if left without water and outside for too long, so on hot summer days it's best to walk your dog in the morning or evening when it's cooler.

"And ensure drinking water and a cool, shaded spot is always available. It's a good idea to clip hair if you have a longer-haired breed, and spray your dog with cool water as much as possible. Remember to never leave your dog in a hot car or a warm room."

The most [obvious sign of heatstroke in dogs](#) is excessive panting and drooling. Other signs include overly red or purple gums; a rapid pulse; lack of coordination; reluctance or inability to rise after collapsing; seizures; vomiting or diarrhoea and in extreme circumstances, coma or death.

Laura added: "We naturally venture into the great outdoors more frequently during summer. It's only fair that our pets come with us too, to get some exercise and fresh air. However, heat isn't the only problem pets have to deal with over the summer months. From burns, to strong waves, and parasites, there are a number of hazards that should be considered.



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“It’s essential you’re aware of what to do when faced with a pet emergency, especially when it’s out of hours or your local vet may be closed at the weekends or bank holidays.”

If you think your dog is suffering from heat stroke, contact your vet as soon as possible, or find your nearest [Vets Now pet emergency clinic or Vets Now 24/7 hospital](#).

**Note to editor**, to embed a Vets Now infographic onto your site FOC, visit: <https://www.vets-now.com/summer/when-is-it-too-hot-to-walk-a-dog/>

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**For media:** For free-to-use video content, visit <https://www.vets-now.com/summer/> please backlink Vets Now in return. Please also see the attached infographic, which can also be used FOC.

**For additional expert comment, product enquiries, further information or high-resolution images, please contact:**

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**Vets Now notes to editor:**

- Vets Now was established in 2001 and is the leading provider of emergency veterinary care for companion animals in the UK.
- With 24/7 Pet Emergency Hospitals in Glasgow, Manchester and Swindon, and 59 out-of-hours clinics nationwide, Vets Now is committed to delivering a responsive emergency and critical care service for cats, dogs and other small animals.
- Vets Now also partners with more than 1,400 veterinary practices across the UK to provide their clients with a seamless out-of-hours emergency care service.
- Vets Now employs over 1000 staff.
- Vets Now remains at the forefront of emergency veterinary care through its commitment to clinical excellence and training, employing many of the country’s top Emergency & Critical Care Specialists.