

Don't Leave Me in Our Car!

Hi Mom and Dad, it's Buddy here. You know, your beloved best 4-legged friend? I need to talk with you about something. You know I love riding places with you in the car. Nothing makes me more excited. But this time of year when you leave me in the car by myself and go into the store, I get scared. You may not know it, but that is very dangerous for me, and I know the last thing you want to do is cause me harm. In fact, you could even get into legal trouble for 'animal abuse' if anyone reported it, and that's the last thing I would want to happen to you. I have been doing some reading on the ASPCA website and this is what I've found, according to those white-coated people you call "vets" in regards to something called Heat Stroke:

My normal temperature should be around 100-102 degrees F. If my temperature were to climb up to 105 degrees, I would be in a crisis. If I am somewhere without adequate shade and ventilation, such as in a hot shadeless yard without water, or in our car by myself, my temperature can quickly rise. Even if left in our car on a breezy 70 degree day with the windows cracked, the temperature inside could rise 40 degrees F within one hour! If I were a chubby or elderly dog, or had a flat-face, I would be especially prone to trouble.

When I start to react to overheating, I become distressed and restless and pant excessively. That in turn makes my body temperature rise even more! (Silly me.) As I become even warmer, I start to salivate excessively and may even become light-headed and unsteady on my feet. My gums may turn a tint of blue or bright brick red in color due to oxygen circulating insufficiently through my body. I may even pass out, seizure, vomit or develop diarrhea.

While we are on the subject, these are some other things to remember during the hot summer: I need to be up to date with doctor visits to be sure I don't have any other ailments that would make me especially heat intolerant. I need to stay well hydrated at all times and I must have shady spots to rest in. If you exercise me and I seem sluggish, you need to let me rest - don't push me too hard. I might love it if you would provide a shallow baby pool for me to lounge in while outdoors. Be careful of me around a deep pool – not all dogs are great swimmers! I do enjoy my short summer haircuts since I look super cool but also feel much cooler. However, I may need sunscreen at times (check with my doctor on this one). Please don't walk me on painful hot asphalt – check my paws closely if you think it may be bothering me. Also remember that I am much closer to the hot asphalt than you are, so it can heat up my entire body. If I seem to be overheating, take me to a cool place, point a fan towards me, and offer me cool things to drink (or ice cubes!) and rub ice cubes or a cool washcloth on my paws, neck, and belly. But don't ever douse me with freezing cold water – that could send me into shock.

Mom and Dad, thanks for taking the time to listen to me! Bet you didn't know I could type... and use such big words. I am forever your faithful Buddy.