

Heat (Heat Wave)
March 2007

heart rate, or respiratory rate; unusual salivation; collapse, stupor, seizures, or coma; redder than normal mucous membrane (gums, for example); or capillary refill that is too fast. Be aware also of signs of dehydration, which is also an emergency. For more information about first aid for cats and dogs, refer to *Pet First Aid*, by Barbara Mammato, DVM, MPH, a handbook sponsored by the American Red Cross and The Humane Society of the United States. For information about other animals, talk with your veterinarian.

If you suspect heat stroke, get the animal out of direct heat and spray it with cool water or place water-soaked towels on its head, neck, feet, chest, and abdomen. The consequences of heat stroke may be life-threatening, but might not be visible to you for several hours, so take the animal to your nearest veterinary hospital right away.

Media and Community Education Ideas

- Ask your local newspaper or radio or television station to:
 - Do a series with information about excessive heat emergencies. Help the reporters to localize the information by providing the telephone numbers of local emergency services offices, the local American Red Cross chapter, and nearby hospitals.
 - Do a story featuring interviews with local physicians about the dangers of sunburn, heat exhaustion, heatstroke, and other conditions caused by excessive heat.
 - During a drought, run a series suggesting ways individuals can conserve water and energy in their homes and their workplaces.
 - Interview local officials and representatives of the U.S. Department of Agriculture about special steps farmers can take to establish alternative water supplies for their crops and ways to protect livestock and poultry from the effects of excessive heat.
- Sponsor a "Helping Your Neighbors" program through your local school system to encourage children to think of how they can help people who require special assistance during severe weather conditions, such as elderly people, infants, or people with disabilities.
- Arrange for air-conditioned shelters to be opened when necessary for community members who do not have air conditioning at home.
- Arrange for special programs to provide air conditioners to vulnerable people in their homes.