

We lost power on Friday night after the storms and were without it until Monday night. Our pets seemed comfortable until Sunday. The cats and dog didn't want to eat much and one of the cats vomited. We had fans for them running off a generator. How would we know if this was heat stroke? This power outage was unexpected and we want to be ready in the future. What should we do to be better prepared?

We are happy to hear you are out of the dark and have power. It was a stressful time for a lot of people and pets.

Pets do not sweat, but instead expel heat through their foot pads and nose and by panting. When the temperatures rise to a certain point, they can begin to overheat. Heat stroke can start with very mild signs but progress to a serious situation very fast. Some of the first signs you can see include tacky gums, not wanting to eat, excessive panting, and unwillingness to play. Although a pet's body temperature is rising to dangerous levels, they may not be drinking a lot of water. Some animals will vomit as well. If you think your pet is showing these signs, it is important to get them into a cool place with fans. Placing wet rags on the paws and offering water can help the pet cool down as well. Do not submerge them in cold water. Cooling the body too fast can be a very dangerous situation. Call your veterinarian as soon as you can.

When the power goes out in the summer, it is best to keep your pets in a cool part of the house, such as a basement. Many animals will seek out cool surfaces including tile and concrete floors. Always make sure fresh water is available and try to have fans available for them if you have a generator. Cooling beds that don't require electricity would be a good idea to have around. For pets that are on medications or prescription foods, it is important to always have at least a week's supply on hand in case of emergency. This storm came up quickly and didn't give much time to prepare. Also, don't forget that some medications need to be stored under certain temperatures. Put insulin and other liquid medications in a cooler with ice. Always keep the information for 24 hour veterinary facilities on hand so you can call them if unable to contact your family veterinarian as well as a basic first aid kit.

We hope you, your family and pets are all enjoying air conditioning and electricity. If you have any questions about how to prepare for the next power outage, see the American Veterinary Medicine Association's website at <http://www.avma.org/disaster/>.

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