

## **Medical Emergency**

**Betty Fisher**

I had a really big scare today, the first time this has happened in over 35 years of owning many bulldogs. My son took Mischief, a 19 month old puppy and a very good breather, for a walk. She is a dog that gets very excited about adventures.

About half an hour later he called from about 5 blocks away. Mischief was hyperventilating and in distress. She was panting but making a very distressed sound and it was obvious that her throat was constricted and she was having to force air into her lungs. I raced down immediately where he was sitting in the shade with her, poured a jug of water on her and offered her water to drink. She improved momentarily but started making the same sound. I put her into the truck and raced to the vet, only 2 blocks away fortunately.

Getting her out of the truck and going into the vet stressed her even more and her tongue was purple by this time. I yelled, "I've got an emergency", raced through to the back, placed her in the tub and started running cold water over her. The vet gave her a mild sedative to relax her, cortisone to reduce the swelling in her throat and oxygen. Her temperature was 105! We also cooled her down by rubbing her with alcohol. In less than ½ hour she was relaxed, temperature back to normal and I could take her home. She could have easily died instead!

Mischief was excited and being a flat faced breed her need for oxygen exceeded her capacity. As she struggled for air her throat became constricted, panic and the need for more air made her struggle harder, the palette and airway swelled from the strain of trying to bring in more air. A vicious cycle was set in process. The harder they struggle to breathe the more inflamed the throat tissues become. As the dog takes in less oxygen more heat is retained increasing the dog's need to pant.

This was caused by too much excitement, not from the weather hot but the result is the same. These episodes can happen more easily on warm days.

It is very important to carry water at all times, and ice cubes in warm weather. Any time your dog starts to become warm is the time to act, don't wait until they are in distress, it may be too late. Soak your dog down, give them ice cubes and try to keep them calm.