



## Interesting Case from our web site [www.fairfield-vets.co.uk](http://www.fairfield-vets.co.uk)



### "Harry" - Cavalier King Charles - Keeping Cool



Harry

As we strive to find a variety of ingenious methods of staying cool in this current heatwave spare a thought for our canine companions.

Our feline friends are designed for the heat by their ability to concentrate their urine by the kidneys thus minimising water loss. Dogs on the other hand must increase water loss to stay cool.

Since 'sweat' glands are primarily only found in between the toes in dogs they have no genuine role in thermoregulation. Instead, water evaporation through saliva from the tongue is the main physiological adaptation for dogs to stay cool. In an effort to improve heat loss the tongue can become quite engorged with blood swelling it quite dramatically in size.

Given the rather inefficient manner that heat loss occurs it is particularly important for our patients, like "Harry", a 7 year old Cavalier King Charles Spaniel with heart disease, to remain at a reasonable temperature and stay hydrated.

When the heart pump starts to fail, fluid builds up in the circulatory system. Consequently, some of the medication prescribed acts on the kidneys to increase urine output and ease the fluid load on the heart and circulation. If a patient is already losing fluid through panting the consequent dehydration can put considerable strain on the kidneys. Additionally the physical effort of panting adds to the already significant demands on the failing heart. Ensuring plenty of fresh water is available is vital. It is also of great benefit to provide a cool shower to reduce the core temperature.

"Harry's" owner confessed to an additional form of therapy in these balmy evenings to cheer him up.....an ice cold Bailey's.....but only a small one! There has been some medical papers written to establish that red wine taken in moderation in humans may have a beneficial effect on heart disease (a project I am personally researching!) However it would appear that "Harry" is pioneering a whole new different area!

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This article is available on the Fairfield Veterinary Centre web site at [www.fairfield-vets.co.uk](http://www.fairfield-vets.co.uk)

***You won't care how much we know - until you know how much we care***