



# Navarro Small Animal Clinic

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## Causes of Panting in Dogs

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Panting can be a sign of many different illnesses and changes in body temperature. A temperature over 102.5°F is considered a fever in dogs. Panting may be the symptom that tips you off that your pet has a fever. An increase in body temperature can be caused by many things including infection or heat stroke.

Heat stroke can occur if your pet is outside for prolonged periods of time without access to adequate fresh, clean water or while playing outside in the heat for an extended time. Dogs are unable to sweat through their skin like humans and can only eliminate heat by panting and through their paw pads. Symptoms of heat stroke include panting, shaking, excessive salivation, collapse, red gums and skin, diarrhea, vomiting, and seizures.

Our pets get seasonal allergies just like their human counterparts. Inhalant allergies can cause upper airway inflammation and lead to difficulty breathing, which in turn causes panting. Typically there is a lot of froth in the back of the throat and your pet will sound congested. Inflammation of the airway can lead to secondary bacterial infections of the upper and lower respiratory tract as well as inflammation of the lower airways.

Stress or fear can lead to excessive panting and shaking. Loud noises, such as thunderstorms, and new pets or people can be very traumatic for your pet. If you find that your pet is not coping well in this type of situation you can discuss behavior modifying drugs with your veterinarian or simply remove the source of stress from your home.

Panting can be caused by intense pain. Your pet is not able to tell you that something hurts, so this is his way of expressing that to you. You may also see muscle tremors and shaking if your pet is painful. There can be a variety of causes ranging from arthritis to abdominal pain or even a bladder infection.

Heart conditions can be a serious cause for your pet to pant. An enlarged heart may compress the lungs and heart failure can lead to fluid build-up around and inside the lungs.

Ingestion of a toxic material can start with panting and progress into other symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea, muscle tremors, seizures, and collapse. There is a long list of toxic materials, household products, and foods that should be avoided in your pets. Just a few of these include chocolate, nicotine, garlic, onion, rodenticides, and human drugs.

Low blood sugar can cause shaking and panting and typically occurs in puppies and small breed dogs. The best prevention for hypoglycemia is frequent feeding, however if your dog experiences an episode of low blood sugar you can always place a teaspoon of honey on the gums to help elevate the sugar levels. If your dog's condition does not improve after giving honey or if your dog has collapsed, then medical attention is needed immediately.

Trauma, accidents, or internal injuries can lead to shock, which can cause panting and shaking. In any of these cases your pet needs immediate veterinary attention. Internal injuries may not be obvious by your pet's external appearance. Tests will need to be performed including bloodwork, x-rays, and ultrasound to rule out any internal damage.

Keep in mind these are just a few things that can cause panting. It is best to seek medical attention early if you have any concerns regarding your pet's health.