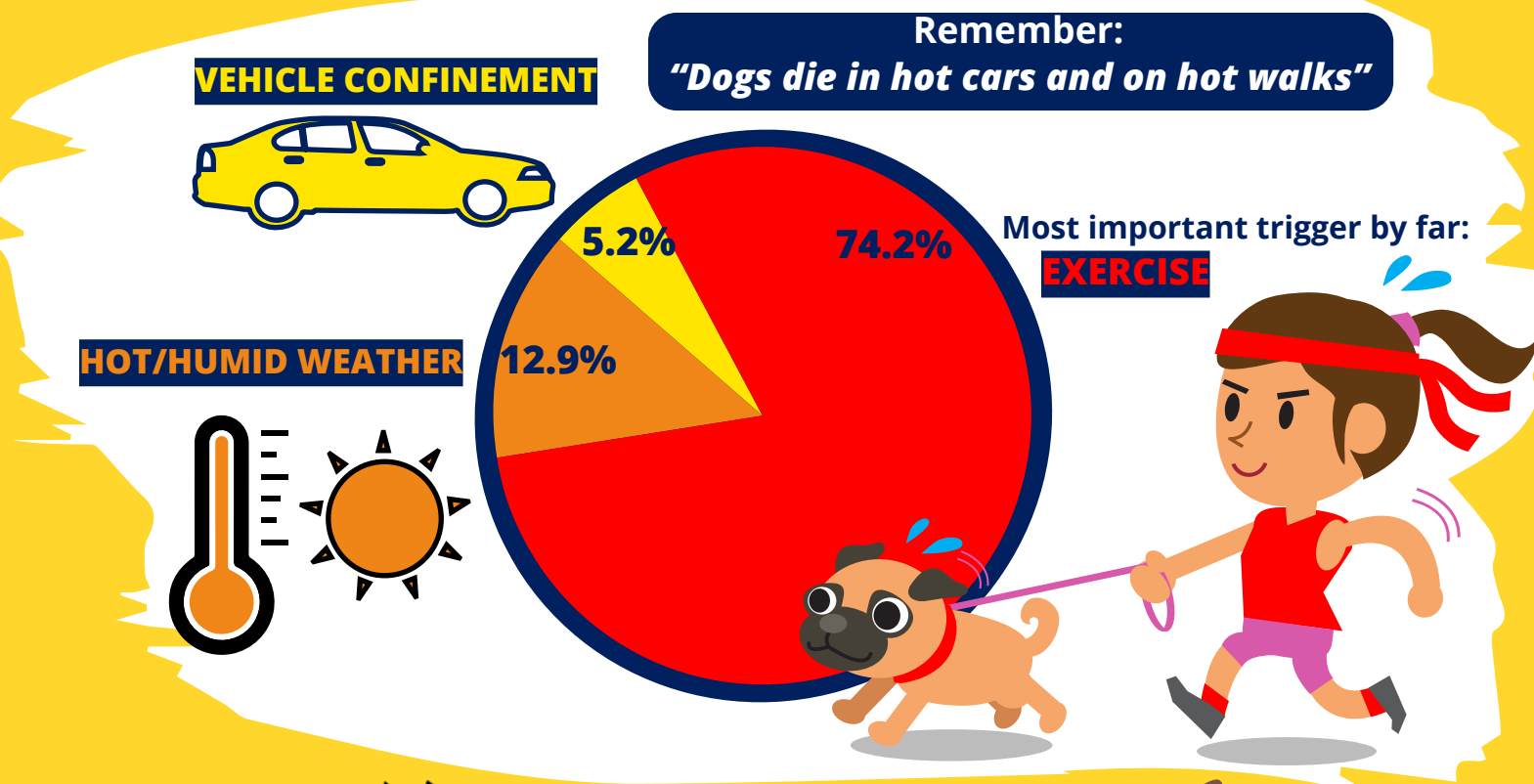


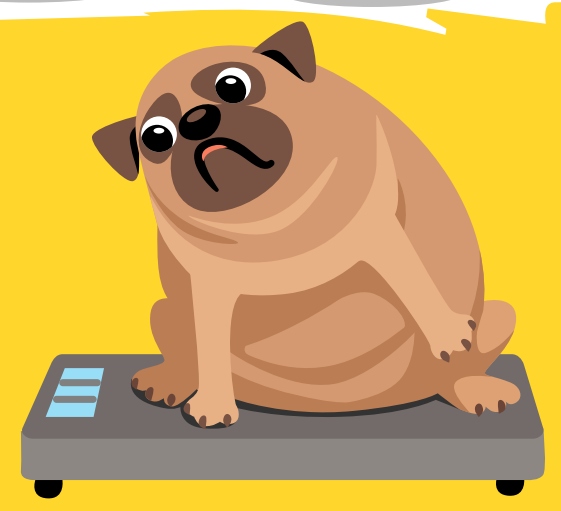
## BACKGROUND

- Heat-related illness (HRI) in dogs can result in tissue and organ damage and is potentially fatal.
- Flat-faced (brachycephalic) dog breeds are at least **twice** as likely to suffer from HRI compared with breeds with medium skull shapes<sup>1</sup>. Some flat-faced breeds can overheat in temperatures as low as 21°C<sup>2</sup> and in humid as well as hot weather.
- But the good news is that the majority of cases can be avoided by knowing what breeds are most at risk, what are the main triggers, what signs to look out for, and what to do if you think your dog might be suffering from HRI.

### Most common triggers for HRI in dogs<sup>3</sup>



Clinical signs of HRI include **severe panting, tiredness, drooling, vomiting and diarrhoea**, which can ultimately progress to unconsciousness and death<sup>4</sup>.



**Overweight and obese dogs are at higher risk of HRI** than dogs at a healthy weight<sup>1</sup>. Obesity in flat-faced dogs reduces the effectiveness of panting as a cooling mechanism<sup>5</sup>.

## BWG recommendations to prevent or moderate HRI

- Early care for any dog suspected of HRI can help to prevent progression to more severe forms. This includes:
  - Remove the source of over-heating e.g. stop exercise, seek shade, remove from car
  - Seek veterinary advice
  - Wetting, soaking or water spray with air movement, or immersion in tap water (ensuring the dog does not inhale water)
- Owners of flat-faced dogs should maintain a lean bodyweight in their dogs.
- Owners should use the **VetCompass Clinical Grading Tool** for HRI in dogs to support earlier and more accurate recognition of HRI.
- Avoid or reduce exercising dogs during the hottest part of the day, during heat wave events and in direct sunlight.
- Ensure fresh water is always available for drinking and cooling during exercise and in hot weather.
- Consider using a walking harness for exercise because using leads attached to collars can compress the airway, affecting breathing and panting.
- Be cautious exercising dogs with fever, dehydration, heart failure or severe breathing problems. Seek veterinary advice before exercising any dog that is unwell.
- Never leave a dog unattended in a car or other vehicle, regardless of how short a time and whether windows are left open.
- Reduce travel time, avoid travel in the hottest times of the day and avoid dogs being in direct sunlight during travel e.g. provide window shades. Plan for possible delays by having access to water, shade, ventilation and fans.

**[CLICK TO READ FULL BWG STATEMENT ON HRI](#)**

### References:

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**BWG advises anyone considering getting a brachycephalic breed to *"Stop and think before buying a flat-faced dog"*.**  
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