

Winter Pet Care Tips

Keep your pets safe and warm this winter with these tips.

Antifreeze Danger

Antifreeze is toxic to your pet's kidneys and can have deadly consequences. The ethylene glycol in antifreeze is sweet tasting and appeals to cats and dogs. As little as one-half teaspoon can be toxic to a cat and just a quarter cup can kill a medium-size dog. Cats can lick enough off their paws to cause a fatal reaction.

Do not leave antifreeze unattended or allow it to spill onto the garage floor or into the street. Consider using nontoxic antifreeze with a bittering agent to discourage pet consumption. If you see your pet drinking any amount of antifreeze, take it to a veterinarian immediately. The sooner treatment is started, the better for your pet.

Shelter

Dogs and cats that sleep outdoors should have a snug, dry, draft-free place to sleep. The floor of the shelter should be raised off the ground to keep cold and moisture away from your pet. Ideally, the shelter should be heated, insulated, and have a door to keep the elements out. During extreme weather, pets should stay inside. If your pet is shivering and refuses to play, the animal is too cold and should come inside.

Car Motors

Car motors are of particular danger to cats who sleep outside. Cats seek the warmth of car motors, and they can be severely injured or killed when caught in the fan belt of a car's engine. Make it a habit to check under the hood for animals and honk your horn before starting your car.

Exercise

When walking smaller and older dogs, protect them with sweaters, and do not stay outside longer than necessary.

Paws

If snow and ice clumps form on your dog's paws, be sure to wipe between each toe with a warm, wet cloth. Deicing salt can cause paws to dry and crack; soak or wash your dog's paws in warm water and dry them thoroughly after walks in areas where salt has been used.

Diet & Water

A high quality food with adequate protein and extra fat is required for animals that spend time in the cold. Your veterinarian may also recommend a vitamin supplement. Remember that water may freeze outdoors. Provide fresh, warm water in a large, deep, plastic bowl throughout the day.

Holiday Plants & Decorations

Mistletoe and holly are poisonous should be kept out of reach of pets. Light strands, loose wires and electric cords can be a serious hazard to your pet, especially puppies, who may chew them. Be careful with ornaments, tinsel, ribbon, and other small holiday decorations that your pet may try to ingest. Avoid adding preservatives, aspirin or sugar to your Christmas tree's water, or keep the water covered.



Antifreeze, holiday decorations and cold weather are just a few of the hazards pets may encounter in the winter months.

Keep them safe with these tips from your veterinarian.



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