

BURR...IT'S COLD OUT THERE!

TIPS FOR KEEPING YOUR PETS SAFE WHEN TEMPERATURES DROP



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Tips For Keeping Your Pets Safe When Temperatures Drop

Winter is here. It's cold, rainy, windy, snowy or all of the above. And it's especially brutal when the Treasure Valley inversions set in and temperatures start dropping into the negatives. It's just plain not fun for anyone, especially your pets (with the exception of Bernese Mountain Dogs, Chow Chows, Newfoundlands, and Saint Bernards, who happen to be built for these conditions.) If you don't have those breeds impervious to Winter, then it's important to take a few extra steps to help make sure your dog or cat avoids the dangers that this time of the year brings.

Here are some practical ways that you can do just that.

The In-and-Out Cycle

Letting your pet continually out into the cold and then back in the dry heat of your home can cause their skin to become irritated, itchy and start flaking. To help combat dry skin issues, it's best to use a humidifier in your house and towel dry your pet right when they come inside. Make



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sure to pay close attention to their feet as snow can get stuck between their paws.

Hair Cuts

Shaving your dog is not something you should even consider during Winter. Your canine needs the hair to keep warm. If your dog has long flowing locks of hair, just keep it trimmed to minimize the hair dragging on the ground. Hair that can touch the ground will pick up snow and de-icing salt that can badly irritate and dry out their skin. If your dog has thin fur or shorter hair, then it may be time to break out some fashionable sweaters or turtlenecks to keep their bellies warm.

Cats are usually not fans of clothing, so it may be best to avoid that dilemma altogether.

Pauses for Paws

After your dog or cat has been outside, wash and dry their feet to remove any rock salt or other chemicals they may have encountered during their time outdoors.

This is especially important to do after taking Fido for a walk. Chances are your "petless" neighbors are

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using regular rock salt so that people don't fall and slip on their driveway and sidewalks. Allowing rock salt to stay on their paws will cause redness, cracking, ulcers (burning caused by the salt) or could lead to salt poisoning if your pet licks their paws to clean them.

Symptoms of salt poisoning include:

- Drooling
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Loss of appetite
- In severe cases, seizures, coma, or even death



To take a more proactive step to protect your pooch from all of the ice-melt chemicals, you can rub their paws with Vaseline (or any petroleum jelly brand). You can also try Booties to protect their feet. It may take some time for your canine to get used to the footwear, but with time, they will get used to them.

If you use ice melt at your home, make sure it's pet-friendly. Brands that are pet safe include:

- Pestell Paw Thaw
- Safe Paws Ice Melt
- Safe Step

- Road Runner Blend Ice Melt
- And Safe Pet Ice Melt (just to name a few)

Tub Time

Bath time during the winter months should be limited as much as possible. Washing your pet removes naturally occurring oils on their skin. These oils help fight the dry heat at home.

If you absolutely have to wash your pet because of a poor choice Fido made with a mud hole, ask your vet or groomer to recommend a moisturizing shampoo, rinse or after-bath spray.

Keep out of Reach of Pets

Antifreeze can appear to be a sweet treat for pets that can sniff the stuff out; it is not. Antifreeze is deadly for both dogs and cats. If you have an antifreeze spill in your garage or driveway, thoroughly clean it up right away.



Signs of antifreeze poisoning include:

- Drunken behavior
- Euphoria or delirium
- Wobbly, uncoordinated movement
- Nausea or vomiting

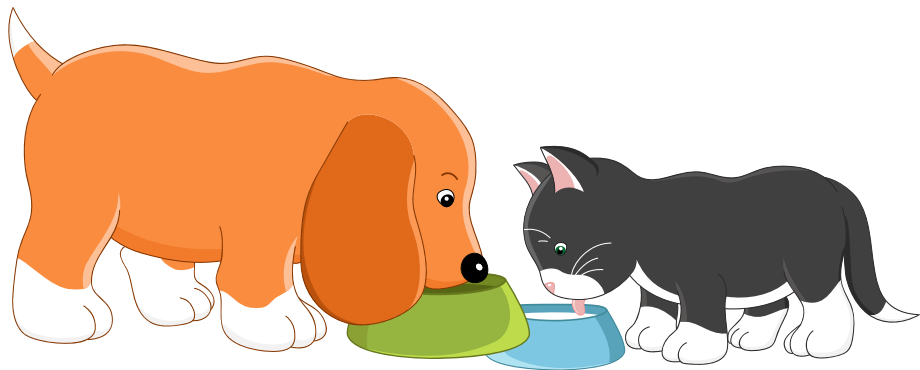
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- Excessive urination
- Diarrhea
- Rapid heartbeat
- Depression
- Weakness
- Seizures, convulsions or shaking tremors
- Fainting
- Coma

If you suspect your pet has gotten into antifreeze, contact your veterinarian immediately.

More Food Please

Like us humans who are outside during the winter months, our pets' calorie burn increases to keep them warm. It's a good idea to increase their daily amount of food to cover the extra calorie burn. Also, keep water readily available. Keeping your dog and cat well hydrated will help their skin from drying out.



Bed Time

Does your pet have a warm place to sleep? Are they near a draft or unprotected from the elements? If so, take the steps now to move them to a location that is comfortable and protected. Try a bed, warm blanket or pillow- your dog or cat will thank you for it.

Your Car

During the cold nights, warm engines are very attractive sleeping quarters for cats and some small wildlife critters. Too many times cars are started while

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the animal is still in the engine. The ending is never a good one. Avoid this entire scenario by honking your horn or hitting your hood a few times to scare away any unwelcome guests that shouldn't be there.

Just like Summer, avoid leaving your pet in your car for any length of time. Cars become refrigerators that trap the cold in, and pets don't have the ability to warm up in that small of an area.

Be Cool

Remember, if it's too cold for you, it's probably too cold for your dog or cat. Keeping your pet inside is always best, but if that isn't an option, take the extra steps to shield them as much as possible from the elements.

Taking just a few extra precautions to make sure your pet isn't too cold (or too hot) will help avoid costly veterinary bills and very happy and healthy furry family member.

