

Winter Safety Tips for Pets

Better Days Animal League

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Free pet emergency card provided for your convenience

Maintenance Tips

Cold weather can be hard on pets, just like it can be hard on people. There are things you can do to keep your pet warm and safe. In case of severe weather remember to protect your pet, bring them in doors, and always be sure they have current license tags, rabies shots and/or microchips in case of separation.

- **Shedding** - Most dogs and cats shed their summer coats in the fall before putting on their winter coat, brushing frequently should help your pet and you be happier.
- **Water** - Always provide fresh, clean water ... when temps dip below freezing, it's important to keep it free from ice.
- **Shelter** - Outdoor pets should have dry, warm shelter out of the wind & it should be winterized with extra bedding.
- **Food** - Staying warm requires extra calories; pets may need more food or a change in diet ... consult your vet.
- **Ice, salt, & snow** - Remove ice, salt, mud, or snow from your pets coats & feet as soon as possible. If the skin looks reddish, white or grey in cold weather, suspect frostbite if the weather has been really cold ... consult your vet.
- **Frostbite** happens when the body gets cold and pulls all the blood from the extremities to the center of the body to stay warm. Animals' ears, paws, or tail can get cold enough that ice crystals can form in the tissue and damage it. It may not be obvious, as the tissue doesn't show signs of the damage to it for several days ... consult your vet.
- **Hypothermia** happens when the body temperature falls below normal, and may occur if your pet spends too much time in the cold, does not have adequate shelter, or is in poor health. Symptoms range from depression & lethargy to stiff muscles & reduced heart or breathing rates ... consult your vet.

Hazard Warnings

- **Car engines** - Cats and kittens like to nap on warm places, this can include car engines! **Knock on the hood or honk the horn**, then wait a few minutes before starting the engine. If in doubt, open the hood and look.
- **Antifreeze** smells good and tastes very sweet to pets, & very small amounts can be deadly. Damage is done by chemicals crystallizing in the kidney. If a pet has been in contact with antifreeze ... consult your vet.
- **Crystals** forming in the urethra - Fall is the most common time of year for cats to form small stones or crystals that block the flow of urine from the bladder through the urethra. Any cat that seems to be straining "to go to the bathroom" should be checked by a veterinarian at once.
- **Halloween** - Candy is not good for pets, especially chocolate. Keep pets inside during trick or treat with the extra traffic in the neighborhood. Be careful when answering the door to greet trick or treaters, with all the visitors and frequently opened doors to sneak out of, pets can also get confused and frightened by the noise or costumes.
- **Holiday food** - keep your pet on its regular diet as much as possible. Alcoholic beverages, candy, chocolate, turkey and fixing, pork, fish, bones, are just a few hazards which may cause issues with your pet's digestive system.
- **Poisonous plants** - Many plants used to decorate for the holidays, including Christmas rose, holly, mistletoe, philodendron, & dieffenbachia, are toxic to your pet so they must be kept out of reach.
- **Holiday paraphernalia** - Electric cords, tinsel, spray on-snow (unless specified as non-toxic), ribbons, rubber bands, plastic or foil wrapping, etc. can be dangerous to your pet. Please take extra precautions during the holidays.