

Living in a Winter Wonderland?

Unless you're one of the lucky ones living in one of the balmy states, you've felt the cold chill of winter arrive. For some of us, cold weather is regarded as a mere nuisance; for others, it's a fun time filled with snowboarding, skiing and other winter joys; and still others will find this time of bone-chilling weather and huge piles of snow a veritable nightmare to endure.



Whatever your viewpoint on winter, one thing remains the same for all of us with pets: it's a time when our dogs need a little extra care. Here is a list of tips to protect your pet from the dangers of winter.

1. In or Out?

Does your pet spend most of the time in the backyard? You might want to keep her indoors during the freezing months, especially if you live in bitterly cold areas. No one wants an icicle for a pet -- they're simply not that cuddly.

2. Bare Naked Truth

If you must keep your pet outdoors, consider this: Would a fur coat alone keep you warm against the elements? No? Well, your pet's fur coat isn't enough protection for your pet during winter, either. Be a pal and provide your dog with a warm, dry, and draft free shelter outside; the shelter should also have straw for warmth.

3. No More Frozen Dinners!

Because it takes more energy to stay warm when it's cold, outdoor animals eat more during the winter. Likewise, fresh, running water is vital for maintaining your pet's health. Keep an eye on the water bowls and make sure they haven't turned into little skating rinks. While ice pops might be a fun treat, your pet really doesn't want to have to lick a frozen lump of ice to get his water.

4. FOOD for your Dog

Indoor animals have different dietary needs. They conserve energy by sleeping more in the winter. Dogs that are living outside need twice as much food because they are using energy to stay warm. SO increase the amount of food you feed your outdoor dogs during the winter months.

5. Frosty the Biting Snowman

We're not talking about the latest horror movie offering from Hollywood. Frosting is a serious problem during winter, especially for paws, tips of tails, and ears. This makes it even more important in keeping your pet warm, especially if they're an outdoor pet. Get special booties, coats, and maybe a hat for your pet during her walks, and look for early warning signs of frostbite such as firm, waxy skin and blisters.

6. The Deadly Drink

The worst of all the wintertime chemical spills is antifreeze, which often leaks from a car's radiator. It may taste delicious to your cats or dogs, but it is extremely deadly -- even the smallest sip can be fatal. If your pet starts acting "drunk" or begins to convulse, take him to the vet immediately. Better yet, keep all pets away from the garage and clean up any accidental spillage. You should also not let your dog wander too far during his walks. Who knows what dangers lie in your neighbors' driveways?

Wintering with your pet is mostly common sense. If you're cold, your beloved pet will most likely be cold too. So snuggle up, keep your pet warm and safe.

