

How to Keep Your Dogs Healthy and Protected During Winter



Winter is here! As we, pet parents, try to stay healthy during the cold winter months, it's important to also be mindful of our dogs. Most dogs aren't attuned to how cold it is outside so we need to judge how our dogs endure the cold (cats should be kept indoors during the extreme cold). Some dogs love the cold while others have very little tolerance for it.

Below are some tips from The Corner Vet to keep your dogs' healthy and protected during the winter months:

Dogs should only be let outside for a short time in the cold

Don't let your dogs' outside for any extended period when the temperature drops, especially short haired or older dogs. When you do take your dogs' out, make sure to keep them moving to keep them warm. Some dogs like wearing a sweater or jacket to help warm them up.

Remember that a wind chill can threaten a dog's life. Dogs are sensitive to severe cold and can get either frostbite and/or hypothermia when they are outdoors during extreme cold temperatures. Further, their exposed skin or noses, ears, and paw pads can quickly freeze and suffer permanent damage.

Wipe your dogs' paws after they have been outside

Make sure to wipe your dogs' paws after they have been outside. The salt and other chemicals used to melt snow and ice can irritate the pads of your dog's feet. Wipe your dogs' paws with a damp towel before he or she licks them and it irritates his/her mouth. Plus, you don't want mud all over your floor!

Don't leave your dog inside the car during the cold weather (just like extreme heat)

Never leave your dog alone in a car during cold weather. A car becomes extremely cold and is not only uncomfortable for your dog, but can cause your pup to freeze to death. There is so much attention to dogs being left in hot cars during the summer, but a cold car during winter can be just as dangerous. Keep your dogs at home and inside!

If your dog has to be outdoors for an extended period, make sure your dog has shelter

If for some reason your dog is outdoors much of the day, he or should have a protected, draft-free shelter that is large enough to allow him to sit and lie down comfortably, but small enough to hold in his/her body



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heat. The house or enclosure should be turned to face away from the wind, and the doorway should be covered with waterproof burlap or heavy plastic. But, is it always preferable to keep your dog(s) indoors.

Keep your dogs hydrated during the cold winter months

Dogs who spend a lot of time outdoors need more food and water in the winter because keeping warm depletes energy. Check your dog's water bowl to make sure the water is fresh and unfrozen. Use plastic food and water bowls rather than metal; when the temperature is low, your dog's tongue can stick and freeze to metal (remember "The Christmas Story"?).

Anti-freeze is very dangerous for your dogs

Antifreeze is a deadly poison but it has a taste that seems to attract dogs. Wipe up all spills and store antifreeze (and all household chemicals) out of reach from your dogs (and any pets). There are some types of antifreeze that are less toxic, but still try to keep them away from your cats and dogs.

Your dogs might feel a little cooped up during the cold winter months, but remember it's for their own good!

[Be sure ask us about our Fear Free approach when getting ready to bring your pet into one of our clinics for their next visit!](#)