
Winter Worries.

With the cold weather now here, the winter months can be a dangerous time for our pets. They can still enjoy this time of year as long as you follow a few precautions. We have put together some winter tips to help keep your pet healthy during this season.



When out and about remember that whilst many dogs love the cold, older, thinner, fine coated breeds, such as lurchers and whippets tend to feel the cold more and find it harder to conserve their body heat; they may benefit from wearing coats. You may want to consider a fluorescent jacket and/or collar especially as the nights are getting darker earlier and many of us are finding we are now walking our dogs in low light. You could also attach a flashing "b'seen" light to their collar to make it easier to see them. Make sure that older, thinner cats are kept in at night as this is when the temperature really drops.

We recommend you ensure your dog has an identification tag on their collar and that all microchip details are up to date for all pets. This increases the chances of being reunited with your pets should they go missing. We could get a few really cold snaps at times and although it's great to get out and about with your dog, it's best to keep a regular check on your dog's feet. Ice and snow can ball up in the spaces between the toes causing discomfort. Salt and other chemicals used to grit the roads and pavements can irritate your pet's pads, especially if they have any small abrasions, so we would advise that when you get home from a walk, wash your dog's feet with warm water.

With lots of water about make sure that your pet doesn't go swimming at this time of year. The water is much colder at the moment and a lot of ponds/lakes are beginning to freeze over. Hypothermia is a condition that our pets can and do suffer from when faced with an extreme decrease in temperature, which can be caused by swimming in such cold waters. If your dog has a tendency to drink a lot from puddles/ponds etc when out walking, we would advise you take a water bottle out with you, as drinking very cold water will affect the body's core temperature, potentially leading to hypothermia.

Look out for any limps and difficulties in rising after rest, these are both signs that your pet may have some joint stiffness and is usually made worse by the cold weather. There are treatments available for this so please get in touch with us at the surgery.

Pets such as guinea pigs and rabbits that live outdoors need special consideration at this time of year too. Ensure that their hutches are warm, clean, dry and in a sheltered position. Make sure that they have plenty of bedding and that it is changed daily. Give them fresh food and water daily and check their water bottles to ensure that the water has not frozen.

Festivity!

The festive season is creeping up on us now and we are all getting ready and stocking up on everything we need to have a lovely time with our friends and families, but please remember your pet at this time as there are lots of things that can make them poorly if they get hold of them. Here are just a few things that you may want to make sure are well out of reach for your pets this Christmas.

Chocolate contains a product called theobromine, which is toxic to cats and dogs. The darker the chocolate is the more toxic it will be. If ingested chocolate can cause diarrhoea and dehydration, so make sure you put the boxes of chocolates out the pet's way!

Grapes, raisins and sultanas can cause renal failure in dogs and unfortunately the quantity your pet has to eat varies with each dog. Some eat only a few and become poorly, yet others can eat a lot more. Vomiting and diarrhoea are the initial signs that are seen. A lot of people will be starting to make the Christmas cakes this month, so please make sure your pet can not eat the ingredients.

Onion, Shallots, Leeks, Garlic and Chives can cause gastrointestinal effects such as in-appetence, vomiting, abdominal discomfort and diarrhoea; in some cases it can cause anaemia and jaundice. So please avoid letting your dog have the left over onion gravy from the Christmas dinner!

Peanuts & Macadamia Nuts can cause your pet to vomit and have diarrhoea. In some reported cases there have been signs of muscle spasm, hallucinations and convulsions.

These are just some of the things to be aware of during this time of year. Many items can cause your pet to be ill at any time of year. If you are concerned about anything your pet has eaten then call us and we can let you know if it is something to be concerned about of not.

Pet Stress and Anxiety

There are plenty of products available now to help your pet cope with fireworks such as Adaptil, Feliway, Zylkene, and Nutracalm to name a few.

These products are in various forms from pheromone-producing plug-ins and sprays (Feliway and Adaptil), to a natural product derived from milk proteins (Zylkene), and a natural remedy to help reduce stress and anxiety (Nutracalm).

If your pet suffers during the firework season why not pop in to speak to one of our nurses about getting something to help them cope. We have lots of information and are here to help.

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