



Don't Let Winter's Chill Take a Bite Out of Your Dog's Health



BEWARE OF ICE, SNOW AND COLD TEMPERATURES. While many dogs with proper shelter can be safe in outside temperatures down to 20 degrees Fahrenheit, puppies, smaller dogs, older or shorthaired dogs should not be left outdoors when temperatures fall below 40 degrees. Don't leave your pet in a vehicle during cold weather. A car in winter is like a refrigerator, holding in the cold and possibly causing the dog to freeze to death.

KEEP OLDER, ARTHRITIC DOGS INSIDE. These dogs should not be left outdoors under any circumstances. Escort the older dog outside for toileting. If the yard has snow or ice, use a leash since he can easily slip and hurt himself.

WATCH FOR SIGNS OF FROSTBITE AND INJURY. Dogs' ears, paws and tails are especially susceptible to frostbite. Initially, frostbitten tissue may appear pale or gray in color, and the area will be cold and hard to the touch. As the area thaws, it may become red. In severe frostbite, within several days the tissue will start to appear black. If you suspect frostbite, bring your dog into a warm location and soak the affected area in lukewarm water for about 20 minutes. Contact your veterinarian.

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR HYPOTHERMIA. Watch for signs that your dog may be getting overly cold when he is outdoors. If he begins to whine or you notice extreme shivering, lethargy, or low heart rate, immediately take him into a warm place, cover him with a light blanket, and call your veterinarian.

ELIMINATE THE POSSIBILITY OF POISONING. Unfortunately, dogs like the sweet taste of antifreeze, which can cause sickness or death if ingested. Be sure all antifreeze containers are well out of reach of dogs, and thoroughly clean any spills immediately. If you think your pet has swallowed antifreeze, contact your vet or animal hospital right away.

PROVIDE A PROTECTIVE SHELTER. If your dog stays outside in the winter, check that his doghouse meets minimum safety criteria. Face the house away from the weather and put a flap on the door. Be sure the house is raised several inches off the frozen ground or concrete. Place straw or cedar shavings on the floor, and change the bedding often to keep it dry. The doghouse should be large enough for your dog to sit and stand, but small enough so his body heat will be retained in the house.

SUPPLY FRESH WATER. Hydration is important year-round. Use a plastic water bowl to ensure the dog's tongue does not get stuck to cold metal, and change the water often to keep it from freezing. Consider using a heated water bowl.

PROVIDE AN APPROPRIATE AMOUNT OF FOOD. A dog that is active in winter will burn more calories in the cold, and thus needs about 10 percent more food to compensate. If he is less active in winter, avoid allowing him to gain extra weight—decrease his food and be sure to take him out for walks and playtime.

CONTINUE TO TRAIN YOUR DOG DURING THE WINTER MONTHS.

Dogs that spend less time outside during the winter may become lethargic—or, in some cases, hyperactive. The best way to keep your dog active or encourage him to spend excess energy is to make him think. Provide 10-15 minutes of training daily on basics such as sit, stay, come, and walking on leash to energize the lethargic dog and tire out the hyper dog. (Doing this twice a day is even better.)

This information is brought to you as a public service by Bark Busters Home Dog Training—the world's largest, most trusted dog training company. Bark Busters is the only international dog training company that offers guaranteed lifetime support. Find more information by contacting your local dog behavioral therapist at 1-877-500-BARK(2275) or by visiting www.BarkBusters.com.

