

Protect Your Dog This Winter

Lower temperatures require special care to keep your dog healthy throughout the cold months.

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals offered these winter safety tips to dog owners:

If you have a shorthaired breed, consider a warm coat or sweater with a high collar or turtleneck that covers your dog from the base of the tail on top to the belly underneath to help keep him warm.

Always walk your dog on leash in winter. Dogs can lose their scent in the snow and ice and easily become lost.

Keep ice-melting products away from pets. Wipe off their legs and stomach to remove any traces of the product. These products are irritating to the skin and gastrointestinal tract. If ingested, they can lead to depression, weakness, disorientation, low blood pressure, cardiac problems, seizures, comas, or death.

Never leave your dog alone in a car during the winter. The car can act as a refrigerator, holding in the cold, and possibly freezing your pet.

Dogs should have a warm place to sleep off of the floor, such as a dog bed or basket with a warm blanket or pillow, placed away from drafts.

Antifreeze, even in small doses, is lethal to dogs. Clean up any spills from your vehicle. Call your veterinarian or the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center if you suspect your pet has been poisoned. Walking your dog on leash will help prevent him from lapping up a driveway or road spill of antifreeze.

Limit outdoor exposure if your dog is sensitive to the cold due to age, illness, or breed type. Take him outdoors only long enough to relieve himself.

If your dog spends a lot of time outdoors engaging in physical activity, increase his daily food ration, especially protein. This will help keep his fur thick and healthy.