

## Caring for Dogs During Cold Weather

**Tips to make sure your pet doesn't fall prey to Old Man Winter.**

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Along with the winter cold come more hazards to the health of dogs, puppies, cats and kittens. Therefore, the ASPCA is offering some guidelines to help protect pets when the mercury dips: Never let a dog off leash on snow or ice, especially during a snowstorm. Dogs can lose their scent and easily become lost. More pets are lost during the winter than during any other season, so make sure your dog or puppy always wears an ID tag. Thoroughly wipe off your dog's legs and stomach when he comes in out of the sleet, snow or ice. He can swallow salt, antifreeze or other potentially dangerous chemicals while licking his paws. His paw pads may also bleed from snow or encrusted ice. Never shave your dog down to the skin in winter; a longer coat will provide more warmth. When bathing a dog in the colder months, completely dry him before taking him out for a walk. If you own a shorthaired breed, consider getting him a coat or sweater with a high collar or turtleneck with coverage from the base of the tail to the belly. Never leave your dog alone in a car during cold weather. A car can act as a refrigerator in the winter, holding in the cold and causing your pet to freeze to death. Puppies do not tolerate the cold as well as adult dogs, and may be difficult to housetrain during the winter. If your puppy appears to be sensitive to the weather, you might opt to paper-train him inside. If your dog is sensitive to the cold due to age, illness or breed type, take him outdoors only to relieve himself. If your dog spends a lot of time engaged in outdoor activities, increase his supply of food, particularly protein, to keep him and his fur in good shape. Antifreeze is a lethal poison for dogs, so thoroughly clean up any spills from your vehicle. A teaspoon or less can be fatal depending on your dog's size. Consider using products that contain propylene glycol rather than ethylene glycol. Give your dog or puppy a warm place to sleep, off the floor, and away from drafts.