

## Cold Weather Tips for Pets

**Pet owners can take a few simple steps to make sure their pet stays happy and healthy until spring.**

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There's still a few more weeks left of winter, and during these times of extreme weather, pet health experts and organizations advise the public to take several simple measures to protect their pets.

There are numerous proven, easy and effective ways for four-legged family members to stay safe and warm during the cold months.

"It's so important to remember that your pet is susceptible to sickness and disease just as you are during times of extremely cold weather," said Betsy Saul, co-founder of Petfinder.com, an online, searchable database of animals that need permanent homes.

Cold weather tips to keep pets safe include: After a walk, remove any ice or snow from your pet's paws and towel him/her off to avoid a chill. Make sure your pet receives plenty of high-quality protein if he or she is outside – staying warm burns more calories. Always give the hood of your car a sharp knock before starting the engine. Cats and other small animals sometimes climb up under car hoods to get warm. The noise will wake them up and give them time to escape. Never leave your pet in a car in cold weather, a car is like a refrigerator and may cause hypothermia. Make sure your pet has a warm place to sleep. Some helpful hints include placing a pet bed away from drafts; lining the floor with an old rug, blanket or dry straw; and facing the opening of a dog house away from the wind and add a door flap to keep the warmth in. Never use metal water bowls outside. When it's cold, a pet's tongue could stick to the metal. Check water frequently to ensure it has not frozen. Save that shaved look for warm weather. Dogs can use a bit of a fur coat when temperatures dip.