



## WINTER PET CARE TIPS

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With cooler temperatures creeping into Central Texas, everyone begins to prepare for the Holiday Season and more time indoors. But what about Fido and Fifi? Are they included in your family winter preparations? If not, there is no better time than the present! For many of us, our pets are members of the family and are treated as such. So, why not prepare and provide for our furry family with the utmost care?

During winter months make sure your pet has a warm, safe place to sleep, off the floor and out of the draft. A soft dog or cat bed is ideal or an old blanket or pillow will provide a little extra warmth. Shorthaired, very young or very old pets should not be left outside for extended periods of time. Limit their exposure to the cold and consider providing a sweater for your little four-legged friends. Some long-haired breeds tolerate the cold temperatures better, such as Huskies, Golden Retrievers, Labrador Retrievers and any other dogs with thick coats. Snow is not a common concern in Central Texas, however even the slightest drop in temperature can have a shocking affect on all of us. If your pet is outdoors, providing appropriate shelter is extremely important. They must have a house with at least three sides, a top and a floor. Cover the floor with old towels, blankets or straw for added protection from the cold. Make sure the house is facing away from the wind and it is large enough for the dog to stand, sit and lie down comfortably. And how many times have you seen a cat dart out from under your car when you go out to turn it on for a quick warm up? Cats often sleep under the hoods of cars because the engines are warm. As a precaution bang on the car hood before starting the engine if you know there are outdoor cats in your area. Another thing to look out for is antifreeze on driveways. Like coolant, the sweet taste of antifreeze attracts animals but it is extremely poisonous. If you suspect that your dog or cat has ingested antifreeze or any other toxic substance, call your regular vet or local emergency clinic immediately.

Here are some additional items to be cautious of during the winter time:

- Holiday foods such as candy, chocolate, turkey, pork, fish, chicken, bones and alcoholic beverages.
- Poisonous plants such as Christmas rose, holly, mistletoe, philodendron, dieffenbachia and even some chemicals that are added to the water for Christmas trees.
- Holiday items including electric cords, tinsel, glass ornaments, candles, spray-on snow (some are safe, see label), ribbons, plastic or foil wrapping.

Overall, the winter season is pretty mild in our area. Keeping your family pets comfortable doesn't require anything extravagant. Simply providing a little extra time and attention will result in a happy and safe winter season.