

PET HEALTH

brought to you by



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Dr. Jim Guntharp

COLD WEATHER TIPS

With winter comes a swift temperature change for parts of the United States. Dr. Jack Stephens, president of Pets Best Insurance, says his pet insurance company's insured

animals run into a trio of preventable cold-weather problems. Just because they have fur doesn't mean they're immune to the cold weather and the problems that come with it.

Frostbite

All dogs are susceptible to frostbite, but it's more common among dogs that aren't used to being outdoors, says Dr. Stephens. "It starts out as a blemish and turns to a blister and turns black when there is severe tissue damage," he says. "When it turns black, that area will slough off and be subject to secondary infection. The dog can lose a toe if subjected to prolonged exposure." Be on the lookout for those signs as well as limping and excessive licking of feet.

Ice melt burns

Ice melts can be sickening to dogs that consume them and can also burn their paws. Dr. Stephens says to be watchful for limping, excessive licking of feet and redness to skin areas between pads.

Dehydration

Don't forget to change water often if your pets are outdoors. Water bowls can freeze easily when the temperature drops, keeping pets from a fresh water supply. "We've seen dogs with chronic kidney failure that are stable go into acute kidney failure due to lack of water—causing emergency hospitalization," he says.

Outdoor pets

If you have pets outdoors, try to bring them inside. Do you have a sun room or an enclosed patio that they could stay in? If it's just not possible to bring them indoors, make sure they have proper shelter to protect them from the cold. A dog house that keeps the wind off them is a good start. Turn the opening of

it away from the direction the wind is from, or face it into a corner of the carport, leaving room for the pet to get in and out, but blocking the wind. If you have cats outside, an inexpensive Styrofoam cooler would

work. Tape the lid shut, turn it upside down and cut a hole in the end just big enough for your cat to enter. Make sure to keep the cooler anchored well so that it won't wobble or be moved around in any wind. A towel or blanket works good to help pets snuggled in warmer. Keep a close eye on outdoor pets to make sure they're protected. Stay warm!

Credit: DVM360



Please contact Jonesboro Family Pet Hospital or your veterinarian for further information on Cold Weather Tips