



## Important Winter Safety Tips to Keep Pets Healthy

Our pets may be covered in fur, but they are still exposed to the harsh conditions of winter. Just as we have to take precautions to stay warm through the cold winter days, so do our pets. Families can help their pets enjoy a happy and healthy winter by incorporating pet-friendly steps into their daily winter routines.

### Winter Safety Tips and Checklist:

- \* Dogs that spend extra time outdoors need more calories in the winter to produce body heat, so ask your veterinarian what amount to feed your pet. Indoor pets, on the other hand, may get less exercise in the cold months, and will need fewer calories to avoid weight gain.
- \* Cats are best kept inside when it gets cold, as are most small and shorthaired dogs. A dog spending time outdoors needs a dry, elevated doghouse with clean, dry bedding and a flap over the opening to keep drafts out.
- \* Never use a space heater, heat lamp, or other device not approved for use with animals. This is a fire hazard and a burn hazard for your pet.
- \* Be sure your pet has plenty of fresh water to drink. Pets lose moisture through breathing and the effects of cold temperatures are magnified by dehydration. Check outdoor water bowls frequently.
- \* Pets are attracted to the sweet taste of antifreeze, a deadly poison. When ingested, even a small amount of this substance destroys the animal's kidneys. Early signs of antifreeze poisoning include disorientation and stupor, followed by coma and death. Lock up antifreeze containers and clean up spills immediately. See your veterinarian immediately if you think your pet has been exposed to antifreeze.
- \* Chemicals used to melt snow and ice on sidewalks can irritate pets' paws. This also may cause pets to lick their paws, causing them to ingest toxic chemicals. Wipe the paws with a wet cloth and provide a footbath when you bring your pet indoors.
- \* Be sure that your pet is current on vaccinations and medical care. A healthy pet will tolerate winter stress much better than an unhealthy one.
- \* Most importantly, use common sense and talk with your veterinarian. Bring all pets indoors when the temperature is extremely low. If your pet spends most of the time outdoors, take extra precautions for his or her shelter.

### NEWSLEASH

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# Puppy Socialization



9 EASY STEPS TO HELP ENSURE A WELL-ROUNDED PUPPY

By Marc Street, veteran dog trainer and owner of The Happy Dog

Once you bring a new puppy into your home, you need to be aware of his special needs. Dogs are social animals and instinctively have a need to bond with their “pack.” Your puppy needs to learn how to respond to you, but also to other dogs. Here are some simple things you can do to ensure that your puppy becomes a welcomed member of the canine society and your home.

- 1. Touch your puppy.** Puppies need to be handled. Rub their ears, massage their paws, get them used to being poked and prodded. By getting your puppy used to being touched, visits to the vet and groomer become easier. The more you do this, the more likely your puppy will be accustomed to being touched and will be less likely to resist.
- 2. Pass your puppy.** Your puppy should meet 100 people before he’s six months old. Pass the puppy becomes a game. A new puppy is hard to resist, which is good for him. Let others hold him, pet him, touch his ears, the pads of his feet, etc. Remember that when you pass a puppy to someone, make sure that they are supporting your puppy and have a good hold on him before you let go. The last thing you want to do while socializing your puppy is drop him, which could be a traumatizing experience for the puppy and all.
- 3. Feed your puppy.** Your puppy needs to accept your presence around his food bowl. You can avoid future problems by not allowing your puppy to become protective of his food bowl. A dog that becomes protective of his food may become aggressive when approached. If your puppy does act protective, take it as a warning sign and seek professional help ASAP. Work to get him used to your presence while he is eating.
- 4. Play with your puppy.** Spend time with your puppy. Teach him games such as fetch and hide n’ seek. Take your puppy’s toys away from him. He needs to learn to accept that you can take his toys. By doing so at an early age, you are helping your puppy not to become protective of his toys. If your puppy becomes aggressive when you take away his toys, your red flags should go up. Seek professional help; behavior like this will not go away on its own.
- 5. Teach your puppy.** Every puppy should know some basic commands. SIT, DOWN, COME, DROP IT, and LEAVE IT. Take a “puppy kindergarten” class as soon as you get your puppy. It’s a great place to start, and it should be a lot of fun for all. Do some research and ask around to find a reputable trainer.
- 6. Roll your puppy.** When playing with your puppy, roll him over onto his side. Hold him there for a few seconds, and then let him go. If he struggles, don’t let him go. You’re trying to teach him that physically he can’t overpower you. When a dog is on his side, he is in a submissive position. By placing your puppy in this position, he learns that you are the dominant member of his pack, and that he can trust you. He will learn that nothing bad will happen when he allows himself to be vulnerable to you. Make this a fun part of every day.
- 7. Puppy play groups.** Many people think that they need to shelter their puppy as you would a baby, which leads many dogs to grow up unable to socialize with other dogs. By getting your puppy into a “puppy play group” at an early age, he will learn how to interact with others. It’s never too soon for your new puppy to meet other puppies.
- 8. Kids and puppies.** Puppies need to learn how to behave around children. Children need to learn how to behave around puppies. Your puppy needs to learn that a toddler pulling his tail is allowed, and that snapping in response to a tug is not allowed. Children need to be taught not to pull puppies’ tails, or they may get snapped at. It’s a fine line; however, there is a mutual respect that all puppies and kids need to learn early on. Never leave a child unattended with any dog at any time. It only takes a second for a disaster to happen.
- 9. Your frightened puppy.** Remember that puppies, like toddlers, are learning everything for the first time. The first time they hear a loud noise or something scares them, they will retreat and be afraid. Your first reaction is to smother them with “It’s OK” and lots of attention. Don’t. Act like nothing happened. By drawing attention to his fright, he will grow to be afraid of everything. Let your puppy realize that the noise he heard wasn’t that big of a deal, and he will learn to recover from startling situations quickly.



# Caring for Pets When You're Ill



*"... living with an illness or immunocompromising condition doesn't mean you have to live without your beloved pet."*



**W**hen you lose much of your strength or mobility, simple tasks like walking a dog or cleaning a cat's litter box can seem overwhelming. And if your immune system is weakened by HIV/AIDS, cancer, kidney or liver disease, old age, or pregnancy, you must take extra precautions to avoid disease-causing agents that any human or animal – including pets – can transmit.

Yet living with an illness or immunocompromising condition doesn't mean you have to live without your beloved pet. After all, research indicates that companion animals enhance immune functioning by decreasing stress levels and increasing levels of self-confidence and self-esteem. Pets provide us with a source of affection, support and acceptance; enable us to feel needed and valued; and ease the pain, sorrow and loneliness often experienced during illness.

For someone with a serious medical condition, the psychological and physical benefits of pet care giving usually outweigh the risk of acquiring an illness from the pet – provided that proper precautions are followed.

## How Could Pets Increase My Risk?

Although pets can do wonders for our physical and mental well-being, they can get and transmit disease. To minimize the risk your pet poses to your health, you must minimize the risks to your pet's health. The key is to understand how best to care for your pet and to work with your veterinarian to keep your pet healthy.

Certain pets are more challenging than others. For example, many exotic animals, such as reptiles, are more likely than dogs and cats to transmit certain diseases, requiring owners to take extra precautions. (The HSUS, in fact, recommends that exotic animals not be kept as pets.) Likewise, puppies and kittens may be more susceptible to disease and prone to play-oriented nipping and scratching. And new pets may come with incomplete or unknown medical histories. This does not mean that you have to give up your playful puppy or can't get a new pet. It simply means that

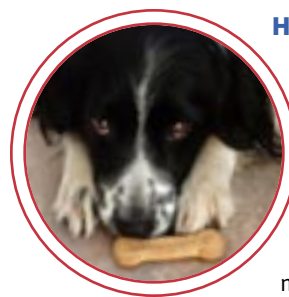
you need to rely on a veterinarian or animal shelter adoption counselor to advise you on appropriate pet selection and care.

No pet is guaranteed to be or remain disease-free. But your veterinarian can suggest preventive guidelines to keep your pet healthy, test your pet for parasites and other problems, and provide medical care to help a sick pet recover. And you can minimize risks for you and your pet by keeping your animal indoors, making sure he's well fed and groomed, and taking him to the veterinarian for vaccinations and annual checkups.

## What Can I Do to Protect Myself?

If you have a compromised immune system, it will help to follow these precautions:

- Wash your hands after handling a pet.
- Wear rubber gloves when changing a litter box or cleaning up after a pet, and wash your hands afterwards.
- Keep your pet's nails short to minimize scratches.
- Follow your veterinarian's advice on keeping your pet free of fleas and ticks.
- Keep your pet indoors and use a leash outdoors to prevent your pet from hunting, scavenging, fighting, and engaging in other activities that expose him to other animals and disease.
- Feed your pet commercial pet food.
- Keep your pet's living and feeding areas clean.
- Keep your pet's vaccinations up to date.
- Seek veterinary care immediately for a sick pet.



## How Can I Ensure That My Pet's Basic Needs are Met?

If your condition makes everyday pet care too challenging, you'll need to find outside assistance to make sure your pet gets the food, grooming, exercise, and general care he needs. When relatives, friends and neighbors can't help, a nonprofit pet assistance organization may be able to lend a hand. Typically, these organizations help HIV-infected pet owners by providing everything from emergency foster care and animal transportation to dog walking, pet grooming and litter box cleaning services.

If you use this assistance, ask local veterinarians, animal shelters, physicians, health care clinics, social service agencies, veterinary schools and libraries to refer you to resources in your community.

*Adapted from material originally developed by applied animal behaviorists at the Dumb Friends League, Denver, Colorado. ©2000 Dumb Friends League and ©2003 The HSUS. All rights reserved.*



Your Dog  
Safe @ Home.



A GUIDE TO THE MOST COMMON INDOOR

## DOG POISONS



### HOUSEHOLD CLEANING AGENTS

- Drain cleaner is extremely dangerous – very toxic and deadly
- Tub & tile cleaners that remove lime
- Products containing disinfectants can be caustic

### MEDICATIONS

- Medicine bottles are seen as rattling toys to a puppy who, once he gnaws the bottle open, can eat the pills inside as treats
- Human medication and the possible combinations that can occur in a dog can be deadly

### MOUSE & RAT BAITS

- Bait can cause bleeding or seizures; place bait in an unavailable area
- Plastic casings are seen as a challenge to get to the treat inside

### ANT/ROACH POISON

- These baits are not poisonous to dogs
- The true danger comes from the plastic casings which, if eaten, can harm a dog's insides

### FOODS

- Caffeine – can be found in chocolate, coffee, coffee grounds, soda, etc. – can cause an irregular heartbeat and affects the nervous system
- Onions & garlic affect the blood
- Rising dough – fermentation creates alcohol and the rising of the dough can cause bloat
- Macadamia nuts cause weakness
- Moldy foods, especially dairy, can cause tremors
- Bones – they may look like fun, but some, like chicken bones, can splinter easily

### POTPOURRI

- Contains irritating substances
- Can cause mouth sores

### MOTHBALLS

- Can affect the nervous system and/or the lungs

### PENNIES

- Most newer pennies (after 1983) have a zinc core that is dangerous to pets
- When swallowed, the outer core dissolves leaving the zinc core to poison the pet damaging blood cells and leading to kidney failure

*In case of an emergency, go to your vet, the local animal hospital or call 1-888-4 ANI-HELP (888-426-4435). For more information, visit [www.napcc.aspc.org](http://www.napcc.aspc.org).*

*Special thanks to Dr. Steven Hanson, Senior Vice President of the National Animal Poison Control Center for his contributions to this piece.*