



Care for Your Furry Friends this Frosty Winter

We are familiar with the concerns we should have about our pet's wellbeing during warmer months, (Dogs over heating in hot cars, is the tarmac too hot for their pads?) but what about their wellbeing during the cold icy months?

Protect the Pads

During these icy periods we should be protecting their pads from any sub-zero temperatures. Body temperatures will lower with any type of moisture and can be uncomfortable for our furry friends, therefore walking time should be limited if there is ice and snow.

Grit and salt used on our roads can be irritating for our pet's skin. Gritters are out in full force during sub-zero temperatures and although this makes it safer for pedestrians and motorists, it can be a potential danger to pets by irritating the skin between their toes.

If ingested either directly or by licking from their paws or fur, the salt can cause increased thirst and potential vomiting.



Daleside
Veterinary Group

WINTER 2019

Ensure that you thoroughly wipe your pet's feet, fur and tummy after they have been outside where gritting has been carried out.

Walking in a Winter Wonderland

Once these sub-zero temperatures start to kick in there are certain things we should consider as dog owners; for example, is their mobility, age, and overall health in good condition.

Dogs with arthritis can find it more slippery on icy pavements. Arthritis causes the loss of muscle mass in the back legs, weakening them and making it harder for them to counteract a slip. Short walks avoiding icy areas will help keep your arthritic pet mobile this season. Ensure



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they have a nice thick warm bed to return to after their walk and avoid letting them sleep on cold floors.

Very young and elderly pets are more sensitive to cold weather. Ensure they are kept extra warm this winter. Take puppies and elderly dogs for short walks little and often. Kong's and puzzle games can be used indoors to help keep puppies and kittens stimulated.

Fight the Fleas

It is a common misconception to think that your pet will be immune from getting fleas during the winter months. Central heating provides the perfect breeding environment for these little pests so always ensure they are up to date with their regular flea treatment.

Bang on Those Bonnets

During periods of cold weather, cats will go looking for warm places to hide. Crawling under car bonnets to soak up the warmth of the engine or hiding under the wheel arches are the perfect places for them to cosy up, but of course they don't know it isn't the safest place for them to be.

Before starting your car up, consider giving the bonnet a bang, and checking under the wheel arches, to ensure there are no cats using your car as a warm hiding place.

If you would like any more information on any of the above, please contact us at the surgery or make an appointment with one of our nurses.



Minimising Stress for Pets at Christmas

Whilst enjoyable for us, the festive season can be incredibly stressful for dogs and cats. Changes in usual routine, visitors, loud music or leaving your pet home alone for longer periods of time can result in anxiety-related behaviours.

Signs of a stressed pet include:

- Retreating to quiet areas of the house or becoming unsettled
- Toileting or spraying in the house
- Lip-licking, yawning, showing aggression or a change in body posture
- Increased grooming and scratching furniture in cats

There are a variety of options that can help your pet relax and remain calm around Christmas. These include:

- Creating a 'safe-space' such as a quiet room where your pet can retreat away from any noise or visitors. Cats benefit from igloo beds or boxes placed up high, so they feel secure.
- Sticking to the usual routine as much as possible – such as mealtimes, being let outside for toileting and walks.
- The use of a calming aid, such as Feliway, Adaptil or Pet Remedy. These products are available as room diffusers, collars or sprays. They release synthetic pheromones that reduce anxiety-related behaviours in pets.

For further advice on how you can reduce stress in your pet during the festive period then book an appointment with a one of our experienced nurses.





You can help hedgehogs this winter by remembering the following:

FOOD – cat or kitten biscuits are best to put down for any hedgehogs that might be looking for food. Tinned food can freeze with the cold weather so is no good. It would help if you could put down fresh water each day too.

TIME - timing is very important for injured or unwell hedgehogs. If you find an injured hedgehog or find one out in the day light you should seek veterinary advice as soon as possible.

WEIGHT - for a successful hibernation they should weigh at least 650grams, anything less than this and their survival during hibernation is slim.

For more information on hedgehogs and how you can help this winter then visit www.wildlifetrusts.org

Hedgehogs at Winter

Hedgehogs are declining at an alarming rate in the UK. They are struggling to cope with climate change, isolation, lack of food and the stresses of our increasingly busy world. 99% of hedgehogs out during day light will be unwell, even though to the untrained eye they may seem fine. They are even likely to still be active and eating well.

As hedgehogs are wild animals, they are programmed to not show signs weakness, but can deteriorate rapidly. Hedgehogs generally hibernate during the winter months in the UK and for most this will begin in October or November. The warmer weather and shortage of food means that hedgehogs are going into hibernation later each year

The Dreaded ‘Winter Padding’

With summer nights of long walks and being outdoors a distant memory, now is the time to be more cautious of what and how much we are feeding our pets.

As a result, it is a good idea to monitor your pet’s weight and reduce their feeding amount as they are no longer burning off those extra calories and they are more prone to putting on a few unwanted pounds. Treats and titbits during winter should be

swapped for low calorie alternatives or healthy veggies such as carrots. All pets should have a visible ‘waistline’ with ribs that can be easily palpated. Overweight pets are susceptible to a range of health issues such as heart disease, diabetes, osteoarthritis and reduced mobility.

Here at Daleside we can help by checking your pet’s weight and devising a suitable weight loss plan. So if you have any concerns about your pet’s weight then book an appointment today.



The 12 Hazards of Christmas...

On the **12th day of Christmas** please do not give to me; Any bones to chew on as they can get stuck in my tummy.

On the **11th day of Christmas** keep all your plants at a height, Mistletoe, poinsettias and holly can give my guts quite a fright!

On the **10th day of Christmas** make sure to lock away your antifreeze, Cats love the taste of it, but it is harmful to their kidneys,

On the **9th day of Christmas** make sure no batteries are lying about, Some dogs like to lick or eat them, but they can really damage their mouths,

On the **8th day of Christmas** watch those presents under the tree, If we eat the wrapping it can get blocked inside our belly,

On the **7th day of Christmas** keep your selection boxes under close guard, Chocolate can give us bad stomachs and can even affect our hearts,

On the **6th day of Christmas** enjoy your tasty Christmas puddings, But don't let us have a bit as their contents are not good,

On the **5th day of Christmas** while cooking up a feast, Keep an eye on those onions, make sure they are out of reach,

On the **4th day of Christmas** as you are still cooking all day, Also keep the garlic well out of my way!

On the **3rd day of Christmas** as celebrations are drawing to a close, Enjoy your wine and bubbly but don't let it near my nose!

On the **2nd day of Christmas** as you eat those final mince pies, Keep them away from my prying eyes!

On the **1st day of Christmas** as you unwrap all your gifts, Watch me closely in case I eat some little bits!

