

Dr. Oakley says....Beware of the cold!

The new year is here and so is the cold weather! I wanted to share a few tips for pet safety during the cold months ahead.

Can any of you feel the storms coming in your bones/joints? So can your pets! Just as the weather fronts affect you, they can also worsen or aggravate your pets' arthritis condition. Talk to your vet about any changes or sensitivities you notice in your pet so that they don't have to suffer through the weather.

Remember their limitations! Short haired or short legged pets tend to have less tolerance to the cold. Short hair provides less protection and short legs leave their bellies are closer to the cold ground and or snow. Pets with conditions such as Cushing's disease, heart or kidney disease, diabetes or other issues may also have a more difficult time regulating their body temperature and we need to take precautions to keep them safe and comfortable.

Long haired pets are somewhat more tolerant to lower temperatures, but no pet should be left outdoors for long periods of time in below-freezing weather. Please be mindful of your own comfort level when determining how much outdoor time they should have.

Be mindful of their legs and paws. During walks their paws or legs could pick up chemicals or ice from the road surfaces. Wipe them down to avoid their grooming and ingesting harmful salt or chemicals and try clipping the hair short between the toes to prevent ice buildup. Musher's Wax is a helpful product that coats and protects their pads and paws. Also, check to make sure they don't have any cracks or splits in their pads...which can become painful and infected very quickly.

Here at LVH, we recently had a happy homecoming story. A sweet hound was found wandering before Christmas and was brought to our office by a good Samaritan. We scanned for a micro-chip and found one! The bad news was that it wasn't registered to the current owner. Fortunately, we were able to contact the original owner, who was the breeder, and get the information for the current owner and a happy reunion happened shortly afterwards. Step one is getting a chip and Step two is registering the chip. Many pets have unregistered chips with no owner of record at all, so please remember to chip AND register your pet so that you can have a happy reunion too!

Antifreeze, antifreeze...it's delicious and toxic! Every winter, Dr. Z sees a few antifreeze poisoned animals. We all have it in our garages or barns. Accidental spills happen too often, so please be mindful when working with it. It is absolutely irresistible and deadly to your pets.

As much as Dr. Z hates for me to mention this part, please make sure you are increasing your pet's food accordingly with the weather. Extra weight is detrimental for us but keeping the right weight for winter is especially important. The more we are outdoors, the more fuel we require to keep at our best weight. Winter is an important time to keep our weight healthy. Generating body heat and energy in cold weather requires more calories so please be mindful of our slightly increased needs in the winter.

Stay warm and get out there and enjoy the snow!

Peace,

Dr. O