

Media Release

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DoveLewis



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – December 8, 2009

Keep Your Pets Warm, Dry & Safe During the Cold Weather

Freezing temperatures and snow can be very dangerous to pets. The doctors and staff and DoveLewis want to remind you that Portland dogs and cats probably aren't conditioned to severe cold, and that the drop in temperatures can cause serious, even fatal health problems in very little time.

Tips to keep them safe:

- Hypothermia and dehydration are the two most probable life-threatening conditions for animals in cold weather. Make sure your pet is indoors or in covered shelter, with plenty of food and water. Blankets or thick towels, even an old quilt will give your animal something to snuggle in against the cold. If you cannot bring your animal inside, check on him or her regularly. Animals used to living in warm temperatures aren't as able to acclimate to a severe drop in temperature.
- Keep them out of the wind. It will cause their body temperatures to drop quickly. The thermometer may say 30 degrees, but with the wind chill factor, the cold they are experiencing is actually a lot colder.
- **Be aware that some chemicals used to melt snow can be hazardous to your pet!** Keep a close eye on them when they're outside, and be sure to clean off their feet when they come back inside. That way, they won't lick their feet and ingest any toxic residue.
- Leaving a pet in the car on these cold winter days can be dangerous. Small dogs and all short haired dogs especially need some sort of blanket or coat if they will be in a cold car for any length of time.
- If they're at home all day in a house with the heat turned off, they should be fine. Just make sure they have a bed and/or a blanket for them to lie on. The floor is a lot colder when the temperatures outside dip this low.
- Animals drink less in cold weather, so it's important to make sure your pet is getting hydrated. Be sure your pet's water supply does not freeze.
- Avoid letting them play in water. It can drop their body temperature severely. If your pet runs through a puddle or falls in a lake, get them out and dry them off immediately. Wrap them in a blanket and get them indoors asap.
- Very young, very old and sick animals need special attention during the cold. Their immune systems can't handle the weather as well as other pets.

Early signs of Hypothermia:

Shivering, lethargy, depression, wobbly legs and pale gums

If your pet has any sign of hypothermia, contact your veterinarian.

DoveLewis is Portland's 24-Hour Emergency and ICU Animal Hospital, offering advanced veterinary care. DoveLewis also shares several 100% donor-funded programs with the community including one of America's largest volunteer-based animal blood banks, an award-winning animal assisted therapy program, a nationally recognized pet loss support program offering five free group therapy sessions each month, 24-hour stabilizing care for lost, stray and wild animals and financial assistance for low income families and abused animals.