

Winter Care

When it's cold outside, extra precautions are required to ensure your pet's well-being. Follow these tips to keep your pet warm and cozy during these chilly months.

The outdoor factor

In Florida, most dogs can be kept outside during the cooler winter months, if that is part of their daily routine. Dogs with thin coats, short hair, and Toy breeds should be kept inside during the coolest parts of the day, early morning and late evening, if possible. If kept outside, they should have a draft-free shelter large enough to stand and turn around in, yet small enough to retain body heat. Use a layer of straw or other bedding material to help insulate your pet against the cold. Different breeds of dogs have different sheltering needs. Purchase a commercially produced doghouse, or contact your local humane society for construction plans for a doghouse suitable for your climate. Please be sure to contact your veterinarian if you have questions.

Watch what your pet ingests

- Batteries contain corrosives that, if bitten or swallowed, can cause ulceration in your pet's mouth, tongue, and gastrointestinal tract.
- Antifreeze is deadly to pets. The sweet taste is irresistible to animals kept in the garage in colder months. Look for "safe" non-toxic antifreeze and make sure all spills are cleaned immediately and thoroughly. Contact your veterinarian immediately if you suspect your pet may have ingested any antifreeze!
- Winter typically is the cold and flu season. Medications as basic as aspirin can be harmful and dangerous to pets. Do not medicate your animal yourself unless under the direction of your veterinarian. Keep all prescriptions and over-the-counter drugs out of animals reach.
- Rat and mouse killers are used more frequently during the winter months. Place these products in areas that are inaccessible to your pet.

If you suspect your pet has gotten into a [potentially poisonous substance](#), call your veterinarian immediately! Have the telephone number to your local emergency animal hospital readily available.