

## Wonderful Winter Pet Tips

**The winter months are upon us again, so with the arrival of the cold weather and seasonal celebrations, we thought we'd look at how the winter months effect pets.**

Central heating is a must for most of us in the winter months and many a pet also enjoys the bliss of laying in front of a fire or wood burner too. Flea eggs also love the warmth that now envelops homes, so if cats and dogs have not been treated with a preventative flea treatment that sterilizes flea eggs, you may be joined by some unwanted houseguests.

Seasonal scented flowers, candles and plug in diffusers also tend to come out at this time of year and are a common cause of skin allergies along with dust mites, fleas and mould. If you see your pet chewing at their paws, rubbing their face, shaking their head and ears or generally scratching excessively after the introduction of any of these types of products, you should stop using them immediately and seek advice from your vets.

If you want to treat your cat this Christmas (or simply distract them from destroying the Christmas tree), buy them an extra tall scratching post, so that they can fully stretch up it and get maximum enjoyment. And for any cat that still needs a bit of persuasion deploy Dad's Monopoly tactic (cheat) – a sprinkling of catnip should do the trick!

Planning a party and have animals that get nervous or scared by strangers, large groups or loud noises (this can also manifest as aggression or attention seeking behaviour), or if you have recently had a new furry edition to the family?

Ensure your pet has a quiet area where it can be away from people if it wants. Dogs especially when they are young tend to like a small space they can call their own so using a dog crate and covering with a blanket in a quiet room is ideal. Remember, it's not just floor space that can seem huge when you are that small but also the height to the ceiling.

Young pets often also find a warm hot water bottle or soft toy that they can cuddle up to comforting, some also like a ticking clock as the rhythmic noise can be comforting like their mother's heart beat.

Investing in a pheromone diffuser may be a good option for both young and old cats and dogs, these simply plug into



an electrical socket and emit an odourless pheromone that calms and reduces pet stress.

Owners of mice, guinea pigs etc... as well as birds, ➔

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➔ should consider covering cages with a warm blanket over night to retain heat.

Reptile tanks will require increases in ambient temperatures or for them to be moved away from areas where heat is lost, such as windows and doors.

Turning our attention to outside... frosty winter walks with your dog can be magical, but dangerous if near water. Always walk dogs on the lead when near water during periods of low temperatures as ice does not always freeze evenly leaving weak spots in what may appear a solid surface. Even once temperatures rise, ice takes longer to defrost on larger expanses of water and snow can mask the water's true edge.

Dog coats are readily available in a wide variety of sizes, colours, styles and prices. This can make a dog that becomes resistant to being walked in the cold, enthusiastic again. Reflective/LED collars and accessories can also provide peace of mind when walking dogs off the lead in poorly lit areas or for locating the family cat that does not want to come in at night and is hiding in the garden.

Outside guinea pigs should be moved indoors for the winter months and you may want to consider moving outside rabbits into sheds or garages. They should always have increased amounts of hay in their bedding area during these period. You can prevent water bottles from freezing by purchasing specially designed protective covers, however you should still inspect the spout daily for blockages.

## Surgery Numbers

Billericay	01277 651068	Northampton	01604 637175
Chingford	0208 524 6326	Orchid	01277 227462
Corby	01536 745212	Peterborough	01733 260523
Crowland	01733 212683	Sawtry	01487 830595
Debden	0208 532 1999	Spalding	01775 724333
Grantham	01476 561419	Thrapston	01832 731731
Hullbridge	01702 233743	Wisbech	01945 581190
Huntingdon	07538 327048	Worksop	01909 488008
Milton Keynes	01908 340544		

[www.vetsavers.co.uk](http://www.vetsavers.co.uk)

A Big Thank You to Novartis Animal Health who have helped make this newsletter possible.



Grittled paths and roads can cause contact allergies and make animals ill if the grit is consumed, so if you know your pet comes into contact with grit you should ensure you bathe their paws or protect them against contact using paw covers/boots.

And lastly, always keep antifreeze well out of your pets reach, it tastes delicious to them, but is deadly.

We hope you and your family have a truly wonderful winter.

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