

## Cold Weather Worries

### Dogs

Despite their fur coats, dogs can get cold in the winter months (especially short haired breeds). Make exercise sessions brisk and avoid standing around in the cold weather. Some dogs may benefit from wearing a coat, a wide range are available for all sizes of dog. When they come in from a walk make sure you dry your pet. Take care to remove any snow from the fur.

Salt used to treat roads and pavements can irritate your dog's feet, ensure you clean feet thoroughly after winter walks. Also beware of hazards such as frozen ponds and lakes.

### Cats

Try and keep outdoor cats in on cold winter nights. Many cats climb into the engine compartment for extra warmth. When getting in your car always tap the bonnet in cold weather first.

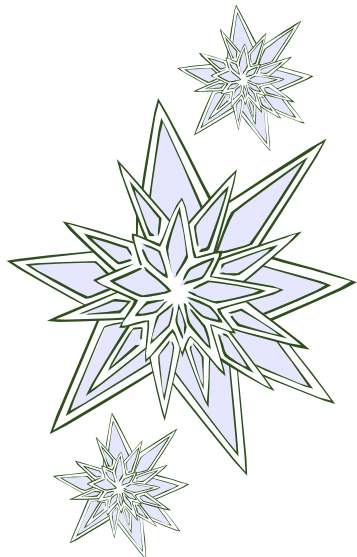
### Outdoor Pets

Pets that live outside (such as pet rabbits and guinea pigs) need special consideration at this time of year. It is important to ensure that their hutches are warm, clean, dry and in a sheltered position.

Bedding needs to be plentiful and changed daily; give them fresh food and water every day and check the water bottle regularly to ensure it has not become frozen.

**ANTIFREEZE** (Ethylene Glycol based) - during this time of year we all have to use anti freeze and similar products. If these ethylene glycol based products are accidentally consumed by your pets the consequences could be fatal.

Ethylene Glycol is **HIGHLY TOXIC** to both dogs and cats. First signs of poisoning can include difficulty walking properly, general loss of balance, vomiting and depression may also be seen. Always store antifreeze in 'pet proof' containers and clean up any spills immediately. If you know your pet has consumed antifreeze, seek veterinary treatment immediately.



# Christmas Hazards

## Hazards around the Christmas Tree

Fallen Christmas tree needles are very sharp, they can easily get stuck in your pets paws or throat. Many pets will ingest the needles which also pose a digestive hazard. Ensure tree needles are swept up regularly to minimize any risks.

Cats love baubles, make sure they are not small enough to be ingested. Try to use unbreakable decorations, fragile baubles are often broken and if ingested can cause blockages or piercing of the intestines.

Tinsel is also a hazard, if ingested it can cause gastrointestinal problems.

Make sure your tree is well anchored so your pet can't knock it over

Unsupervised pets can chew on electrical wires and electrocute themselves. Ensure cables are out of reach of your pet.

Do not hang chocolates from your Christmas tree, they are highly toxic and your pet could be tempted if they can see or smell them.

## Foods to avoid

Turkey or Chicken bones - these can splinter and get lodged in your pets throat or intestines.

Any leftovers - these are likely to cause diarrhoea.

Coffee

Alcohol Beverages

**CHOCOLATE** - contains Theobromine which is poisonous to pets. Chocolate with a high cocoa content is particularly dangerous. Make sure all your visitors are instructed not to give tit bits to your pet. Unregulated treats could cause stomach upsets.

## Common Poisons

Plants - Holly, Mistletoe, Lilies, Yew trees, Poinsettias and Amaryllis. Chosen for their colour and seasonal appeal, many owners do not realise they are poisonous.

Chocolate - chocolate can be fatal to dogs if eaten in sufficient quantities. The toxic substance called theobromine is present in higher concentrations in chocolate with a high cocoa content. Only a small amount of chocolate, as little as 50g is enough to kill a small dog such as a Yorkshire terrier. Signs of chocolate poisoning are vomiting, excessive thirst, excitability, drooling and in severe cases convulsions and death. If you have any suspicions at all that your dog may have ingested some chocolate then seek your vets advice immediately. Always take the packet of chocolates to your vet so they can assess the potential danger of that particular product.

## Noises

Christmas crackers, poppers, balloons, champagne bottles and fireworks - remember loud sudden noises can panic your pet. Ensure they have a secure place they can retreat to if they become scared.

## Other Christmas dangers for pets

Remove wrapping paper from the floor to avoid your pet chewing and swallowing it. For your pets safety always buy their toys from a reliable good quality pet shop or veterinary clinic.

For peace of mind check your local vets opening times over the Christmas/new year period and have their contact numbers to hand.

Most pet related Christmas dangers are easy to avoid, just be aware of your pets activities.

# New Years Eve - Fireworks Fear

The sound and sight of fireworks can cause animals a huge amount of stress. Some behaviour that they may show are: Barking constantly, Hiding in small dark places , Shaking/Trembling , Constantly seeking reassurance from their owners

Here are some ideas to help you and your pet through this potentially difficult time:

## **Plan Ahead - Create a "special place" -**

somewhere near the centre of your house where your pet can go, maybe their favourite room. Put in lots of blankets for your pet to dig & burrow in. Include an old unwashed piece of clothing so that your pet can smell your scent. Try to minimise the amount of noise entering the room by closing windows and doors. Your pet should not see the flashes from fireworks so ensure the curtains are closed. For dogs, leave some tasty chews and toys in the room in case your pet wants to try something chewy to relieve their tension, though don't worry if they aren't interested in them. If it is possible, also place a radio or TV in the room to help mask external noises. Your pet should be introduced to their 'special place' at least a week before you anticipate the fireworks to start. Remember – DO NOT let your cat out at night when fireworks are expected.

**Around the house:** have the volume on your TV or radio at a moderately loud level. A good beat can be an effective way to mask the firework noises. Ensure all windows, doors and curtains are shut to help minimise noise.

**How you should act:** try not to react to the fireworks yourself, act calmly. Do not get cross with your pet when they are scared, it will only make them more frightened. Do not try and comfort your pet, it will give them the impression there is something to be feared. It can be perceived as a reward for their frightened behaviour.

Ignore your pet when they look scared and only show attention/affection once they have begun to relax. Try to keep your pet happy by playing lots of games and doing little bits of training using food treats with dogs.

## **Products that might help**

### **Dogs:**

Dog Appeasing Pheromone (DAP)  
Appeasing Pheromone is a substance naturally released by lactating females to re-assure and calm offspring. Canine appeasing pheromone is secreted by the bitch from around 3-5 days after the puppy's birth. This enhances attachment between the puppy and its mother and conveys signals of well-being. The re-assuring properties of canine appeasing pheromone persist up to adulthood. DAP has already shown to help dogs in numerous situations: Fear of fireworks and thunder storms, distress when left alone, worry caused by changes in the environment. DAP is available as a plug in diffuser, a spray or in collar form.

Desensitisation CD's – These are designed to be used prior to Bonfire Night to help desensitise your dog to the noise of fireworks.

### **Cats:**

Cat facial pheromones (Feliway)  
Feliway reproduces certain pacifying properties of cat facial pheromones creating a state of well-being and calm.

The placing of facial pheromones is a behaviour which is well known to all cat owners. When a cat feels safe in its environment, it rubs its head from the side of the chin to the base of the ear, against the furniture, corners of walls or the bottom of curtains. By doing this, the animal is depositing facial pheromones. These marks convey a message of well-being and a feeling of security.