



Cold weather tips

[Keep your dog warm](#)

Cold weather can cause itchy, flaky skin – so the warmer your dog is, the less discomfort she will feel. As soon as she comes in the house, towel her off and remove any snow from her body and between her foot pads. Keep her cosy, warm bed (or if your house is like my house, your cosy, warm bed) away from all drafts.

[Bring your outdoor dog inside](#)

If it's too cold for you, it's too cold for your pet. Don't leave them outside; it's cruel and inhumane and they deserve to be inside where it's warm.

If you can't bring your dog inside, provide her with a warm, solid shelter against the wind and unlimited access to fresh water. The floor of the shelter should be off of the ground (to minimise heat loss into the ground) and the bedding should be thick, dry and changed regularly to provide a warm, dry environment. But please avoid using space heaters and heat lamps because of the risk of burns or fire.

[Don't leave him in the car](#)

Did you know leaving your pet in the car - even for a few minutes when it's really cold outside - can be harmful to your dog? Cold cars become like refrigerators and can quickly chill your pet, so if you're running errands on a frosty day, leave your dog at home.

[Buy her a coat](#)

If she's a small, short-haired, short-legged, elderly, or sick dog, she needs a coat to help combat the winter extremities. If she's long-haired, don't shave her; let her long, fluffy coat keep her warm, but keep it clean and trim to minimize lingering snow and ice on her fur.

[Buy him boots](#)

When dog paws are exposed to the winter elements, they're at risk for cracking, drying, and frostbite. What's more, toxic chemicals like ethylene glycol found in antifreeze, coolants, and road salts are poisonous, so once the ice and snow arrive, be sure to check between your dog's foot pads to make sure he doesn't track it into the house or lick and eat it.

[Let her be stinky](#)

Washing your dog too often can remove essential oils and increase her chances of developing dry, flaky skin. If she smells terrible and must be bathed, ask your vet to recommend a shampoo or conditioner that will be good for her skin.

[Inspect your furnaces and heaters](#)

This is important advice for humans too! Carbon monoxide is odourless, tasteless, and invisible, and since it can cause serious health problems to both people and animals, have your heating unit checked for any possible leaks or malfunctions.

Keep an eye on fireplaces, space heaters, and any other hot surface that your dog may snuggle up to for warmth. Your dog can be burned if he gets too close, electrocuted if he chews through its cord, or start a fire if he knocks it over.



[Keep her away from water](#)

If you live near a pond, lake, or other body of water that freezes during the winter, be careful while walking your dog or letting her off leash. Dogs can easily fall through the ice, and it's very difficult for them to escape or be rescued and there's a high risk of hyperthermia and muscle problems from very cold water.

[Monitor his food intake](#)

Indoor dogs generally need less food in the winter, but outdoor dogs need more because it takes more energy to stay warm when it's cold. Feeding your outdoor dog more and keeping his water bowl full can help provide much-needed calories and keep him well-hydrated throughout the winter.

[Watch out for hypothermia and frostbite](#)

Hypothermia is a life-threatening condition that can result from extended exposure to cold while frostbite is a temperature related tissue injury that most commonly occurs on ears, tails, scrotum or feet.

If your dog is showing signs of shivering, shallow breathing, weak pulse or lethargy, she may be suffering from hypothermia; if she's showing signs of discoloured skin (red, pale, or greyish) swelling, or blisters, she may have frostbite. If you suspect your dog has either of these temperature related illnesses, immediately take her to a warm, dry place and contact your vet.

[A few final thoughts](#)

Don't let your dog eat snow - it causes upset stomachs.

Be an animal advocate. If you see a pet outside in the cold, politely let her owner know you're concerned and see if you can help

Having a dog during the winter can be great, but in order to make the most of the season and have fun together, it's important to keep your dog safe, warm, and protected.

When you do, you'll happily and confidently be able to build snowmen, make snow angels, and taunt him with the hot chocolate he can't have...