

## PET CARE and COLD WEATHER

**R**emember that winter can pose risks for pets.

### COLD

In cold weather, walks may need to be shortened, especially for pets with short coats. Make up for the shorter walks by adding an extra walk when possible. Several short walks are just as good, if not better, than 1 long walk.

When the weather gets cold, many people start spending more time indoors. Snow drifts, ice and sub-zero temperatures can mean shorter walks and more frequent treats. If your pet's activity level declines in the winter, be sure to adjust their calorie intake accordingly to prevent unwanted weight gain. Other pets, especially those who live outdoors, may need more food to help fuel the extra heat production they need to keep warm.

Outdoor pets must have warm shelters and access to water that isn't frozen. Pets can not be left outdoors unprotected.

### SALT

Boots can be used to keep feet more comfortable and to protect pads from road salt.

If you walk on salted roads or sidewalks, rinse your dog's feet with water after each walk to remove salt residues.

### TOXINS

Carefully check driveways and garages for antifreeze puddles. While most brands of anti-freeze have a bitter flavouring added to reduce poisonings, even a small amount can be deadly.

## THE HOLIDAYS



**I**f your family celebrates the holidays with gift giving, you may be tempted to include the pets. While the intention may be good, some gifts can be trouble for your pet.

Keep treats in moderation. Sudden diet changes or salty, fatty treats can cause stomach upset and can result in vomiting and diarrhea. Some foods may trigger food allergies. Rawhide bones are a favourite but can cause gastrointestinal upset and can also be the cause of life threatening bowel obstructions.

All pets should be supervised with new toys. Make sure the toys are free from easily removed pieces and watch how your pet interacts with it. Toys that are torn, ripped or unraveling should be thrown away. Even seemingly indestructible toys can be dangerous.

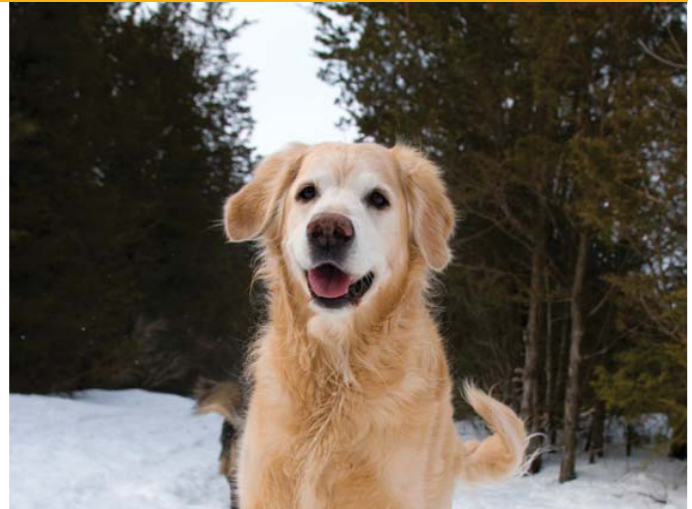
Pets do not make good gifts for other people or other families. A pet is a long term commitment and the choice to add a pet to a family should not be made lightly. If you want to help someone become a new pet owner, a gift certificate for a pet store or shelter may be a better option. This will enable them to choose the pet and timing.

## BE INFORMED

**A**ccurate information empowers us to make the right decisions for our pets. Your vet will assist you with making decisions regarding the care for your sick pet and will recommend care for your seemingly healthy pet. This is called preventive healthcare. It's for all pets!

## SENIOR WELLNESS

**I**f you consider the 80-year average life span of a human in Canada, and compare that to an average of 10-12 years for dogs and 13-15 years for cats; it becomes evident that dogs and cats age much faster than people. The signs of disease can appear very quickly, sometimes after the time for the most effective veterinary intervention. Wellness exams are key to the early detection of disease and successful management of your pet's health.



## TRAVEL

**T**ravelling with your pet can be a challenge. Proper planning and preparation can help make the trip easier for everyone!

**By car** – when travelling by car, pet owners need to make sure that their pets will be safe in the event of an accident. All pets should be restrained, either in a secure carrier or with a pet seatbelt to prevent them from being ejected from the vehicle in the event of a crash. There are pet seatbelts made to fit all cars and trucks. Pets also need to have regular bathroom breaks on long trips. Make sure to keep a leash close at hand to prevent dogs from running off when you open the car door. Cats should have access to a litter box and some quiet undisturbed time to use it. Both cats and dogs can suffer from car sickness so talk to your veterinary team about the available solutions before you travel. A few trial drives are a good idea.

**By train** – before you even book your ticket, check with the railway to confirm their policy on pets. Depending on how you travel you may not be able to keep your pet with you during the journey. While motion sickness is less of a concern when travelling by train, you will still need to plan on providing pets with access to food, water and bathroom breaks. This may mean finding special food and water containers for your pet's crate.

**By air** – flying presents challenges both in accommodating the pet and in meeting import restrictions if you are travelling to another country. You need to start making these preparations months in advance of travel. Carefully review import policies for vaccine and parasite treatment requirements as well as for any quarantine periods your pet may be subject to. A health certificate is often required from your veterinarian as well; your pet may need to be examined by your veterinarian in the days immediately prior to travel. You will also need to make sure that you have an airline approved crate or carrier for your pet to travel in. Many owners wonder about sedating their pet for air travel. While this may help relax and quiet the pet, it can interfere with your pet's ability to adjust to changing temperatures and can pose a greater risk to your pet's health. Please discuss the use of sedatives with your veterinarian.

Not all hotels allow pets. Those that do may require the pets be crated when you are not in the room with them. Check the policy of all hotels before travelling.