



PRESS RELEASE

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Cold Weather Can Kill Your Pet

“Do not think that because your dog or cat has a fur coat that he will be protected from winter weather,” says Matthew ‘Uncle Matty’ Margolis, dog trainer, author, behavior expert and host of the PBS Series, WOO! “It just isn't so. During severe cold weather, dogs and other pets need to come in the house or be provided with some kind of adequate shelter.”

In a statement released recently by Pfizer Animal Health, weather may also intensify certain health concerns such as arthritis. *“Similar to people who suffer arthritis pain, pets with mild, moderate or severe osteoarthritis may experience more joint pain when the weather turns damp or cold,”* says Dr. Bernard Cruz, associate veterinarian at Laguna Hills Animal Hospital in Laguna Hills, California.

Prolonged exposure to cold results in a drop in the body temperature of dogs, cats and other pets just as it does in humans. If your pet stays too long in the cold or gets wet in the snow or rain and then the temperature drops as it does at night, the animal could suffer hypothermia. This uses up the pets energy and can cause low blood sugar. Violent shivering is followed by apathy, then collapse and coma. Arthritis is a common disease found in dogs and cats and even if the disease is mild, pain can be increased during damp or cold weather.

A responsible pet owner will never expose an animal to the possibility of hypothermia, (in a dog, a rectal temperature below 97 degrees) but if hypothermia does occur in your dog, here are some things you must do according to Uncle Matty:

1. Wrap your dog in a blanket or coat and get him inside immediately.
2. If your dog is wet, give him a warm bath and dry him with towels. Rub your dog briskly.
3. Apply warm water packs or hot water bottles that are warm to the touch of a wrist but not hot. Place them on your dog's chest and tummy as well as under his armpits. If you don't have packs or hot water bottles, then wrap him in an electric blanket. Keep in mind that as sensation returns to his body, he will suffer pain. He may try to bite at his skin. He will need sugar so add about an eighth of a cup of honey or three or four tablespoons of sugar to a pink to drinking water.

What about frostbite?

Again, humans are not the only creatures that are prone to frostbite. It can affect the toes,

ears and scrotum of pets. Ear tips are especially vulnerable. A good indication of frostbite is canine skin that first appears pale and whitish. As circulation returns, the white areas will most often become red and swollen. A little later the dead tissue looks like a burn and begins to separate in a couple of weeks. These areas are prone to infections.

If your dog suffers frostbite, warm (not hot) the affected areas with warm water soaking for ten to twenty minutes and towel dry. Do not rub. Be sure to apply antibiotic ointment to the affected areas and then bandage. These affected areas will be painful and you need to keep the dog from biting the skin.

Older dogs and puppies are the most vulnerable as are pets with health conditions because they are less likely to be able to regulate their body heat to any degree.

“During winter, I get a lot of calls and e-mail from pet owner who tell me that use winter clothing to protect their pets. Coats and sweaters may help for little jaunts and leash walks, but they are not much good during lengthy exposure to cold and useless if they become wet,” says Margolis. “Dogs and cats lose a lot of their body heat through their ears and feet.”

If you have a pet, you are responsible for his well being at all times. “I have little patience with fair-weather pet owners. “Too much cold and too much heat are both problems,” says this expert, and those are two more reasons why a dog should be trained so he knows how to behave inside the house.”

Margolis also advises pets to have a vet check before color weather begins to make sure health is not a factor and he emphasizes that allowing bad weather to harm a pet is another form of abuse. There is more information about dogs and dog care at <http://www.unclematty.com>

If Used, Please Credit

Matthew “Uncle Matty” Margolis, is a dog trainer, aggressive dog expert, best-selling pet author and host of the PBS Series, Woof! It’s a Dog’s Life. Learn more about dog behavior at <http://www.unclematty.com>

For an Interview

Matthew “Uncle Matty” Margolis is available for telephone interviews and personal appearances about this and other dog-related topics. To set up a time or inquire about availability, please e-mail Karen Golay at the following address and put *Uncle Matty Interview* in the subject line: mediarelations@unclematty.com or call 480-609-3582.