



**ARL**  
ANIMAL RESCUE LEAGUE OF IOWA, INC.

## *Your Dog: Health Tips*

### **Health Tips**

Dogs cannot talk to us when they are sick, so as a responsible dog owner it is important to pay special attention to your dog's well-being during the winter season:

- Antifreeze, which often collects on driveways and roadways, is highly poisonous. Although it smells and tastes good to your dog, it can be lethal.
- Rock salt, used to melt ice on sidewalks, may irritate footpads. Be sure to rinse and dry your dog's feet after a walk.
- Provide plenty of fresh water. Your dog is just as likely to get dehydrated in the winter as in the summer. Snow is not a satisfactory substitute for water.
- Frostbite is a winter hazard. To prevent frostbite on ears, tails, and feet, don't leave your dog outdoors for too long.
- Be very careful of supplemental heat sources. Fireplaces and portable heaters can severely burn your dog. Make sure all fireplaces have screens and keep portable heaters out of reach.
- Like people, dogs seem to be more susceptible to illnesses in the winter. Do make sure to take your dog to a veterinarian if you see any suspicious symptoms.
- Don't use over-the-counter medications on your dog without consulting a veterinarian.



### **Holiday Safeguards**

The winter season brings lots of fun holiday festivities, but pet-owning households must take special precautions.

The holidays are not ideal for introducing a pet into your family. New puppies and dogs require extra attention and a stable environment, which the holiday season doesn't permit. Also, a puppy is not a toy or gift that can be returned. Instead, give a festively wrapped can of dog food or a leash as a symbol of the dog to come.

- Holly, mistletoe and poinsettia plants are pet poisons! Make sure they are kept in places your dog cannot reach.
- Review holiday gifts for dogs to make sure they are safe. Items such as plastic toys and small rawhide sticks may be dangerous.
- Remove holiday lights from lower tree branches. They may get very hot and burn dogs.

- Watch out for electrical cords. Pets often try to chew them and may get badly shocked or electrocuted. Place wires out of reach.
- Avoid using glass ornaments. They break easily and may cut a dog's feet and mouth.
- Refrain from using edible ornaments. Your dog may knock the tree over in an attempt to eat them.
- Also, commercial foodstrings may contain pain or toxins in the preservatives.
- Whether your tree is live or artificial, both kinds of needles are sharp and indigestible. Keep your tree fenced in or in a room that can be blocked off. A playpen, for example, may act as a barrier.
- Tinsel is dangerous for dogs. It may obstruct circulation and, if swallowed, block the intestines.
- Alcohol and chocolate are toxic for dogs, even in small amounts. Keep eggnog, sweet treats and other seasonal goodies out of reach.

The holiday season is a stressful time for dogs. Try to keep a normal schedule during all the excitement.

*Information provided by The American Kennel Club, Inc.*