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Cold Weather Care for Senior Pets

Winter is around the corner. Senior Pets need more attention as the temperatures drop. Here are a few tips to help your senior make it through the cold weather.

Avoid Slipping

Pets can have a hard time walking on slippery surfaces. A pet that has arthritis will have even more difficulty. In the winter time, make sure that steps and walkways are treated with a pet safe ice melting product. Clear a path in the snow, so that your dog does not have to trudge through deep snow to go to the bathroom. In the house, lay out mats or runners on slippery surfaces such as hardwood. If your dog tolerates booties, there are many different products on the market that have a grip-like surface to help with traction. You can even make low cost paw covers for use in the house using baby socks and puffy paint.

Provide Joint Support

As they age, many pets will develop arthritis in their joints. Common areas of arthritis include knees, hips, elbows and the spine. Signs of arthritis onset can be gradual, and many pet owners may not realize their pet is in pain. You can be proactive and watch for signals of joint pain, which can include; slowness to get up and down, slow to get moving, not wanting to play, decreased length of play, trouble with stairs, falling, not wanting to be petted or touched in certain areas, decreased grooming (cats), limping, stiff gait, resistant to going on walks, tires quickly, and licking over joints. During cold weather, pain from arthritis can be more evident. The first step is to start your pet on a joint supplement by contacting your veterinarian to discuss the product that is best for your pet. Many products found at pet stores may not help your pet, with ingredients not at a high enough level or not adequately absorbed by the pet. Joint supplements can take 3-6 weeks to get to high enough levels to help your pet. If a joint supplement is not providing enough relief for your pet, they could benefit from oral pet pain medications. Your veterinarian can help you decide what is best for your pet.

Comforts for your Pet

Senior pets benefit from a thick padded dog bed. In cold weather, there are various dog beds that also provide low levels of heat. With any product, make sure your dog is not eating the bed, and it is used as directed. Dogs with a short hair coat or that do not tolerate the cold may need a pet jacket, especially when temperatures are below zero. When the weather is nice, senior pets still enjoy leisurely walks.

Disclaimer: This written content is meant to be educational and is not medical advice. Always consult a veterinarian about medical advice for your pet.