



October 20, 2009

Autumn and the Holiday Season

The fall season is upon us for another year; a great time of the calendar year and the Holiday season.

Fall brings some unique health concerns for our furry family members.

Leaking antifreeze from vehicles, cats and fan belt trauma, and weather changes with the wet weather as well as the colder weather are some problems to watch out for.

The Holidays bring about concerns with table food, over feeding, treats (especially the people kind), ornaments (especially tinsel, wires, and string wrappers), and basting strings.

If you are going to be accompanied by your dog(s) during trick-or-treating be sure to attach a small halogen light to the collar and maybe a reflective collar or vest as part of the costume and keep him or her out of the goody bag. Cats seem to be unfortunately vulnerable to pranks and sometimes cruelty during Halloween so it is best to keep them in during the evening events.

Cold weather, especially if abrupt in the early fall and with moisture can be very harsh to a pet that is outside. If your pet is mainly inside, the hair coat may not have developed to the point of adequate protection. Feeding requirements, in particular amounts, increase in the fall and winter. It has been demonstrated that at 32 degrees Fahrenheit or freezing, horses and cows have to eat all day just to break even in the calories lost in maintaining their body temperature. There are a variety of outer garments to cover our short haired pets.



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Hydration is a key to staying warm, dehydration decreases survival time in the cold.

For the outdoor group, hikers, walkers, bikers, hunters, and campers, there is a Rattlesnake vaccine available for dogs. You can discuss this with your dog's doctor. It reduces the effects of snake venom, however, you should always seek medical evaluation and care if your dog is bitten. Snakes are grouchy and more easily stumbled on in the fall and spring when the outside temperatures are colder and the snakes are more sluggish.

Winter athletes of the 4-legged variety need to be trained and ready over 6-8 weeks with incremental training. Do not jump off the couch spilling the bowl of popcorn, return the movie and go cross country skiing or snowshoeing without fitness training. Pay close attention to foot care and ice formation if you are out for extended periods.

Warm wishes to all during the autumn and the holiday season!!!

Marc W. Davis D.V.M.