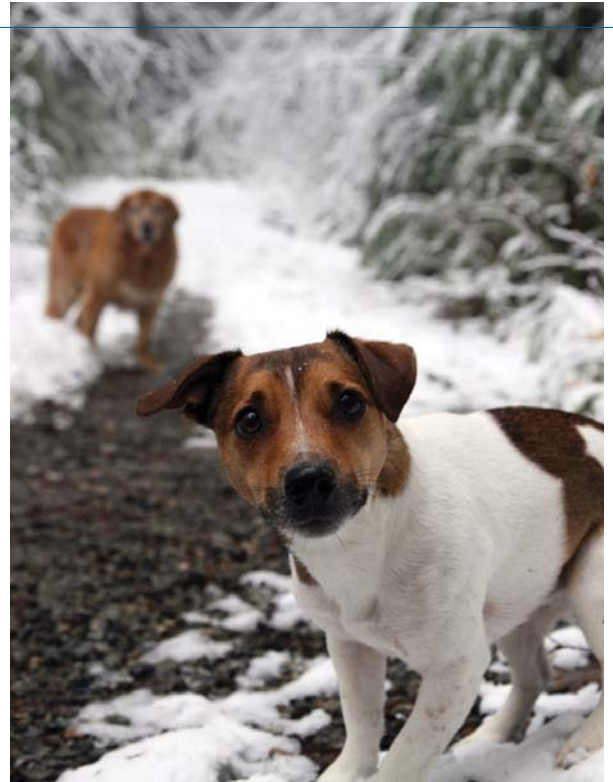


EXERCISE SAFETY

We need to be just as aware of our pets exercise needs and safety in the winter as in the summer. While heat exhaustion is not a risk in winter as it is in summer, cold exposure and slip and fall injuries can be.

Just as we bundle ourselves for winter, our pets can benefit from some extra protection. Certainly, not all pets need additional winter gear, the fur and footpads they were born with work just fine. Breeds arising from northern regions, like Labradors, Newfoundland dogs, St. Bernards and Spitz breeds have nice thick coats and pads suited to the snow and ice. If your pet has a short or thin haircoat, it may not be enough to keep them warm. Shortening walks to reduce cold exposure helps, but coats and/or boots can allow your pet to enjoy winter a little more. Remember, if it is too cold for you to be comfortable outside in your coat, boots, mitts and scarf, chances are it is too cold for your pet. Some pets will also find that the snow gets matted into the fur on their feet, boots will help keep snow from accumulating. Boots also protect feet from salt and ice melters, which can damage paws.

Slippery sidewalks and stairs can lead to falls and can cause serious injury in pets as well as in people. Pets can fall and break bones, suffer soft tissue injuries like sprains and strains and can even suffer an ACL tear. Stairs can be especially dangerous. Senior pets and pets with reduced vision may need to have the snow cleared for them and would benefit from a little extra help. Also remember to keep your pets leashed and firmly held. Snowy roads mean that cars have more trouble stopping and may have difficulty avoiding a pet that may have escaped your grip due to your slip or fall. So, take care of yourself too!



What is an ACL?

The ACL or anterior cruciate ligament is a ligament in the knee responsible for preventing excessive motion and stabilizing the knee. Tears are common injuries for human athletes and for dogs, especially in larger breed dogs and overweight dogs. Tears usually occur as a result of a sudden force or impact on the knee, like a twist or fall. Recovery can be long and difficult and often involves surgery.

WINTER BREAK VACATION

Make sure to talk to us about any travel you are planning with your pet this winter. Disease risks vary from place to place and there may be threats waiting at your chosen destination. Fleas, ticks and mosquitoes are common during the winter in some of our favorite holiday spots. These parasites may bite your pet and can be the source of other diseases such as heartworm, Lyme disease and Ehrlichia.

Spring brings the return of heartworm season in Ontario. Don't forget to speak to us regarding your pet's flea, tick and heartworm needs.



ORAL & DENTAL HEALTH CARE

You are likely aware of the various products available to help keep your pet's mouth clean. There are rinses, gels, chews, treats and even special prescription diets available to assist in this important health care item. Do you know how to properly brush your pet's teeth? How often should you have your pet's teeth cleaned? When was the last oral exam we gave your pet? If you are unsure about any of the above items, please call us to learn more. It's important.

Dental care is about more than just teeth and brushing. Pets can suffer from other diseases that affect their mouths. It has been estimated that close to 50% of dogs and more than 30% of cats over the age of 10 will be affected by cancer. Like in humans, cancer can affect any part of the body, including the mouth. Common oral cancers in cats and dogs include both benign tumours (local tumours that don't spread) and malignant tumours (invasive tumours that spread into the body). Oral cancers represent about 6% of all cancers in dogs and 3% of cancers in cats. Common oral cancers in dogs include fibrosarcomas, squamous cell carcinomas, melanomas and osteosarcomas. The most common oral cancers in cats include squamous cell carcinomas and fibrosarcomas. Cancer treatments for cats and dogs are available but early detection is important. Regular exams are an opportunity for the veterinarian to identify any visible reasons for concern, such as sores, discolorations or masses in your pet's mouth. Talk to us about the other cancer screening options available.

BE INFORMED

Accurate 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.