

5 Common Winter Illnesses in Dogs & How to Avoid Them

Just like humans, our furry friends are also susceptible to catching diseases in winter. However, knowing about the common winter illnesses, their symptoms and preventive measures can help in making the most out of winter without falling sick! Read on to know the 5 most common winter illnesses in dogs and how you can avoid them! .

Hypothermia – Pets already suffering from heart disease and diabetes are at higher risk of catching this disease. Also, hypothermia is a serious ailment that if left untreated can be fatal for your dog.

The symptoms include slow heart rate, shivering, stiff muscles, weakness, lethargy, and failure to respond to stimuli. To check for hypothermia in your fido, use a rectal thermometer and check her temperature. The normal body temperature in dogs is around 100.5 F. If your dog's temperature is anything around 95 F or lower, wrap her in a thick blanket and take her to the vet immediately.

Flu and Pneumonia – Flu refers to a contagious upper respiratory disease while pneumonia refers to the inflammation of the lungs in pets. If your fido is young or senior and spends a lot of time outdoors in cold weather, s/he might be at higher risk of catching flu and pneumonia.

The common symptoms dogs exhibit during flu and pneumonia is fever, loss of appetite, runny nose, sneezing, dry and moist cough, watery eyes, etc. If your fido shows any of these symptoms, you should immediately take medical help.

Frostbite – Frostbite occurs due to overexposure to cold weather, ice, or snow. When a dog's body gets too cold, it starts drawing blood out of the limbs so as to maintain a stable body temperature. As a result, ice crystals start forming on the tissues of ears, tail, nose and paws. If left unchecked, these crystals can even lead to tissue damage. Frostbite may occur at three degrees. The first degree of frostbite is characterised by hard skin on the nose, ears, tail, and toes that becomes red and swollen when warmed. The second degree is slightly more dangerous than the first one and leads to the formation of blisters on your fido's skin. The third degree is the deadliest as in this stage the affected area will start darkening and they might be at a higher risk of developing gangrene.

If your fido shows any signs of frostbite, it's better to consult a vet at the earliest for

proper diagnosis and treatment. However, primary treatment may include getting him to room temperature and washing the frostbitten areas with lukewarm water. The best way to prevent frostbite is to limit the time your fido stays outdoors in winter.

Kennel Cough – Kennel cough is a viral infectious disease in pets that can occur at any time of the year but is more common during winter. The most common symptom of kennel cough is a dry and honking cough. Other than this, fever, runny nose, sneezing, and eye discharge are also seen.

Usually, mild cases of kennel cough can clear up on their own. However, severe cases may need immediate medical treatment. Also, since it's a contagious disease, if your fido is infected with it, try to keep him isolated so as to prevent the disease from spreading.

Moreover, kennel cough vaccines can be another preventive care measure. If your vet recommends the same, make sure to vaccinate your dog against it.

The Sniffles – Common cold in pets during winter is quite usual and at times not very serious. If your fido shows signs of a common cold such as a runny nose, mild cough, and a lethargic body, home treatment such as feeding boneless and skinless chicken and chicken broth (without onion or garlic) can be done. Further, you can allow her to rest, wrap her in a warm blanket and switch on the room humidifier.

However, if your fido is too young or has an existing medical condition, consulting a vet is the best option. Read more about winter care tips for pets to keep your pets hale and hearty in winter.

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