

Out and about:

- For dark morning and evening walks use a fluorescent/LED collar or accessory on your pet so they are more visible.
- Grit, ice and snow can irritate skin, so rinse paws after walks and use petroleum jelly to protect between dog's toes.
- Energetic dogs, particularly working dogs, can develop hypothermia and low blood sugar if they exercise for long periods in cold wet weather, so offer extra small meals during the day to keep them going.
- Keep your dog on the lead near fast or frozen water but if he or she gets into difficulties please do not endanger your own life. Most dogs will manage to climb out by themselves. Notify the emergency services if necessary, and contact family or friends.

At home:

- Foods - raisins (in Christmas cake and puddings), grapes, chocolate and raw onions are some of the human foods that can be poisonous for pets.
- Turkey and chicken bones can be crunched up into dangerous sharp fragments so never give these to your dog.
- Wooden skewers from food and party canapes are commonly eaten by dogs, so make sure your dog can't get them (even when they are in the rubbish bin).
- Food recycling containers - toxins from mouldy food can affect the liver, cause tremors and seizures and can be fatal in the worst cases.
- House plants and cut flowers such as lilies, poinsettia or ivy also pose a risk, especially to cats, if chewed or eaten.
- Batteries and medications such as paracetamol and ibuprofen should never be left lying around for pets to swallow.
- Antifreeze is especially lethal, as pets often like the taste. Use the safer propylene glycol antifreeze, or one with a bitter taste additive, and wipe up any spillages.
- To avoid upsetting your pet's stomach, limit extra treats and give their usual pet food on Christmas day.
- Be careful with children's toys. If swallowed by pets small objects can obstruct the intestine, needing surgical removal, or occasionally lodge in the back of the throat to cause airway obstruction and choking.

Keep our phone number in your contact list and remember that vets and nurses are always available at any time, day or night, if you are worried and need advice or a consultation. If your pet eats something it shouldn't please call us immediately with as much information as you can – exact details of what and how much they ate.