

## Protecting Cats During Wintry Months

### **Advice on how to keep cats and kittens from suffering weather-related ailments.**

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Although they're equipped with fur coats, cats and kittens can still suffer from frostbite, exposure and dehydration during wintry months. Cold weather spells extra hardship for outdoor-only and indoor-outdoor cats, who often go without adequate food, water, shelter or medical care. If you live in an area being blasted with cold weather, animal welfare organizations have some tips to help protect your pets.

Keep animals inside when possible, particularly kittens, elderly animals, small animals and short-haired cats.

Don't allow cats to roam freely outdoors. Animals can also become disoriented when there is snow or ice on the ground. More animals are lost during the winter than during any other season.

During winter, cats sometimes climb under the hoods of cars to be near warm engines and are badly injured or killed when the car is started. To help prevent this, bang on the hood of a car before starting the engine.

Increase pets' food rations during winter because they are burning more calories to keep warm. Also be sure that pets are free of internal parasites, which can rob them of vital nutrients.

Keep an eye out for strays. Bring unidentified animals inside until you can find their owners or take them to an animal shelter. If strays are skittish or otherwise unapproachable, provide food and water and call your local humane society for assistance in trapping them and bringing them indoors.

Wipe off your cats' legs, feet and stomachs after they come inside from the snow. Salt and other chemicals can make your animals sick, if they ingest them while cleaning themselves.