



# GUNSTON ANIMAL HOSPITAL NEWSLETTER



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7685 Armistead Road • Lorton, VA 22079 • (703) 339-7725

## Chilly Critter Care

**C**old weather can be hard on pets, just like it can be hard on people. Extended periods of time outdoors can put pets in danger of serious illness. There are things you can do to keep your animal warm and safe.

- Keep your pets inside as much as you can when the mercury drops. If you have to take them out, stay outside with them.
- Some animals can remain outside safely longer in the winter than others. Length of hair, size, and your pet's health all affect his or her ability to withstand cold weather.
- Cats will curl up against almost anything to stay warm—including car engines. Before you turn your engine on, check for Fluffy.
- If you live near a pond or lake, be very cautious about letting your rambunctious dog off the leash. Animals can easily fall through the ice, and it is very difficult for them to escape on their own.
- If you light a fire or plug in a space heater to keep your home toasty warm, remember that the heat will be as attractive to your pets as to you. Use caution: pets can either burn themselves



*Darby Hurst*

or knock a heat source over and put the entire household in danger.

- Pets that go outside can pick up rock salt, ice, and chemicals that melt in their foot pads. To keep your pet's pads from getting chapped and raw, wipe her feet with a washcloth when she comes inside.
- Keep an eye on your pet's water. Sometimes owners don't realize that a water bowl has frozen and their pet can't get anything to drink.
- Be particularly gentle with elderly and arthritic pets during the winter. The cold can leave their joints extremely stiff and tender. Consider modifying their environment to make it easier for them to get around and make sure they have a thick, soft bed. Also, watch these pets if you walk them outside; a bad slip on the ice could be very painful and cause a significant injury.



*Roxy Wilcox*



*Jen and Pugslicie Rhoton, Nicole and Zeus Botelho*

- Go ahead and put that sweater on Princess, if she'll put up with it. It will help a little, but you can't depend on it entirely to keep her warm.

## National Dental Awareness Month

**F**ebruary and March are National Dental Awareness Months at Gunston Animal Hospital. During these months, all dentals will be discounted by 10% (excluding medications). Please call for an appointment and take advantage of the savings. A healthy pet's mouth is a happy pet. Our licensed veterinary technicians would be glad to examine your pet's teeth at no charge. Free toothbrushes, food, and dental gels will be given during National Dental Awareness Month.

When you're outside with your pets during the winter, you can watch them for signs of discomfort with the cold. If they whine, shiver, seem anxious, slow down or stop moving, or start to look for warm places to burrow, they're saying they want to get back someplace warm.

Winter can be a beautiful time of year. It can be a dangerous time as well, but it certainly doesn't have to be. If you take some precautions, you and your pet can have a fabulous time taking in the icicles, the snow banks, and the warm, glowing fire at the end of the day.

# Pet First Aid: Hypothermia

**H**ypothermia, or a body temperature that is below normal, is a condition that occurs when an animal is not able to keep his or her body temperature from falling below normal. In mild cases, animals will shiver and show signs of depression, lethargy, and weakness. As the condition progresses, an animal's muscles will stiffen, heart and breathing rates will slow down, and he or she will stop responding to stimuli.

If you notice these symptoms, you need to get your pet warm and take him or her to your veterinarian. Wrap your pet in blankets, possibly with a hot water bottle or an electric blanket—as always, wrapped in fabric to prevent against burning the skin. In severe cases, your veterinarian can monitor his or her heart rate and blood pressure and give warm fluids through an IV.

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## New for 2004

**G**unston Animal Hospital is proud to announce our new endoscope and ultrasound machine, both of which allow us new medical capabilities!

An endoscope is a flexible tube-shaped instrument that contains a camera lens and a light at the end. The device is inserted into the body to examine the stomach, intestine, or colon, and/or take tissue samples for testing. Masses, strictures, and foreign bodies may also be detected.

An ultrasound machine uses sound waves to form a picture of body organs for medical diagnosis. Ultrasound is an effective technique in assessing a pet's liver, gallbladder, and kidneys. By using this device we are able to watch organs as they function without being invasive.

The next time you visit us, be sure to ask how these devices can benefit your pet's health.

### Have A Heart Kitties

**A**ll of these adorable cats are up for adoption and are looking to be wonderful additions to your family. Please help us find homes and give us a call to take one home today.



*Homer*



*Cleopatra*



*Will*

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Check out our website at  
[www.gunstonanimalhosp.com](http://www.gunstonanimalhosp.com)