

Ideas on keeping your dog warm this winter

We have had our first snow already and Meg is snuggled into her jumper on the sofa!

The cold weather doesn't just affect our skinny whippet friends. Animals with heart / circulatory conditions, the elderly, puppies, ill or arthritic dogs, etc. can all feel the cold and be affected by it.



How to recognise that your companion is cold

Curling up in a tight ball to conserve what little heat they have; shivering or teeth chattering; clinging to any available heat source.

The following are suggestions for ways to keep them warm and more comfortable this winter.

TTouch: Earwork is invaluable for cold dogs. Taking the ear between thumb and fingers, gently stroke your fingers down to the tips and off the end of the ear. Keep it rhythmical and regular. Let your dog tell you what feels good. Work on both ears. Try it on yourself to see how effective it is at warming you through.

Clothing: a good dog jumper or coat (without buckles or straps to cause discomfort when sleeping) made of fleece is invaluable. If your dog gets wet, dry them thoroughly and put on a jumper. (<http://www.mekuti.co.uk/hotter.htm>)

Bedding: Draught-proof it. Ensure they can push their backs into something soft and snugly. Line with Vetbed or some other heat retaining fabric (like fleece) to reduce draughts. Heat pads (pet ones) or bubble wrap under the bedding reflects body heat.

Food: warmed if possible. Cold food takes a lot of energy to warm up and may chill the tummy. Regular small meals through the day can help keep blood sugar stable. Consider increasing calories (Meg has porridge with peanut butter, blackstrap molasses and banana for breakfast!)

Exercise: keep out of the water! Keep them moving, but be careful about long walks on cold days. Play games indoors and out that stimulate their circulation and keep their minds working.

Crystallised ginger: when all else has failed with Meg, we give her one piece of crystallised ginger. It warms her right through from the inside and works very quickly.

Feet: check the pads regularly for signs of cracking. Neem oil rubbed into the pads can help enormously (<http://www.mekuti.co.uk/neem.htm>).

Enjoy the cold weather, and make sure you keep warm yourself!!

DANGER: Anti-freeze is sweet tasting – a teaspoonful is enough to poison a small dog. Keep it safe up high, wiping off any drips, and clear up any spills.

Beware of your dogs drinking puddle water in car parks.

