



# Wilmette Pet Center

*"the place for people who love pets"*

The seasons have changed, and with the mercury is dropping, we have to make some changes – longer shirts, pants, light jackets. We thought it was time to go over some tips for our pets, from the common sense to a few things you may never thought of (and not just for dogs, too).

**Dogs:** No pet should stay outside indefinitely. For dogs that spend time outside, provide plenty of water and a shelter where they can get out of the wind.

As we prepare our cars for the cooler weather, be very careful to not leave any antifreeze accessible to the dog. It is both very delicious and very toxic.

It's getting darker earlier, so don't forget to wear something reflective when taking Ramses for a walk.

Since autumn is the time when many people make home repairs and preparations for winter, it's a good time to go over your dog's equipment. Check their leashes, collars, and harnesses for wear and tear, replacing anything worn or broken. Check all fences and runs for loose spots or holes, before Wrigley gets out in really bad weather.

Fleas and ticks can be most active in the fall months, as they look for hosts to get them through the winter. Be sure to keep up your spot treatment, check for ticks after long walks, and wash bedding and vacuum pet areas frequently to stop them from wintering inside your house.

One of the biggest changes for your dog, and a big challenge for you, is their new winter coat (and not a mink one). This is a time for shedding, as their summer coat falls out. They also tend to shed some of the winter coat, since their bodies don't need the insulation inside. Keep up the fiber and enzyme supplements to help prevent hair impaction, and brush frequently with a de-grooming brush such as the FURminator to remove loose hair. The new season can be harsh on their skin and coats; Salmon oil, like Grizzly Salmon Oil is your best friend, as it helps sooth dry, irritated skin, and those Omega-3 fatty acids make their new coat beautiful. Let their short summer coat grow out, and, if they have really short hair to begin with, when it gets colder get them a great sweater to stay warm.

Dogs are not the only animal friend sharing our lives. Here are some tips for the rest of our friends:

**Cats:** Outdoor cats will often climb into the motors of cars to stay warm. If cats tend to roam your neighborhood, bang on the hood or honk the horn before starting your car.

**Bettas:** While your little betta buddy has been doing great all summer, you may start to notice him slowing down and getting lazy. Adding a small, shatter proof heater to his bowl will help keep him warm and active.

**Rabbits:** If you keep your rabbit in a hutch outside, be ready to bring them into a sheltered space, like a garage, when the weather turns bitterly cold. Provide plenty of hay and bedding for them to burrow into to stay warm. If you have a rabbit or guinea pig, be eco friendly by using their soiled bedding as mulch and compost. Wood beddings such as shredded aspen can be used as mulch, protecting plant's roots. Paper beddings can be used as mulch or composted; rototilling it into the ground next year gives you great soil. You can soak soiled bedding in water overnight, strain, and then use to give plants their fall feeding of fertilizer, loaded with nitrates and ammonia. It's great for indoor plants, too.

**Reptiles:** This time of year many reptiles may slow down, eat very little, and sleep all the time. Reptiles can respond to the decrease in the amount and intensity of light by bromating, a form of hibernation. Make sure that they have been eating well and defecating normally. You can perk them up and keep them active by increasing the wattage of their heat bulbs.

**Birds and parrots:** For a lot of parrots, fall can trigger a molt, where new feathers grow and push out old ones. This is the time of year we hear how surprised Polly's parents were when she flew right off their shoulders! Bring them in for a wing (and nail) trim before you get a surprise, too. Help reduce the irritation the pin feathers cause by misting your bird, and add some vitamins to seed-only diets. It's especially important to be sure their cage is out of any cold drafts.

The decrease in sunlight at this time of the year can be a downer for us, but imagine what it's like for your tropical bird! Adding on a UV bulb in a dome can help regulate your bird's mood and feeding schedule. It can help alleviate depression and regulate their mood, so if Nacho is not playing with her toys, consider bringing the sun inside. Placing the light on a simple timer is an easy way to make sure your bird gets plenty of those needed rays.

With a few special considerations, you and all your pets can safely enjoy what some feel is the best time of the year.