



Winter 2025

PawPrints

Welcome back PAWS pals! As the desert winter settles in with its crisp mornings and sunny afternoons, we're excited to share the latest news and seasonal pet care tips from your trusted PAWS veterinary team. While our winters are mild compared to much of the country, this time of year still brings unique challenges and opportunities for the cats and dogs we love. From holiday safety reminders to wellness updates and community highlights, we're here to help you keep your pets healthy, comfortable, and happy all season long.

Colder weather can make joint stiffness and discomfort more noticeable in cats and dogs, especially those with arthritis or aging joints, because joint fluid may thicken, and reduced activity can contribute to stiffness and pain. To help support healthy joint function and mobility during the winter months, many pet owners consider supplements that target cartilage health and inflammation. Glucosamine- and chondroitin-based products like Dasuquin Advanced offer a multi-mechanistic approach with ingredients such as avocado/soybean unsaponifiables, MSM, and omega-3s to support cartilage production and joint comfort. Another option, Jope Hip & Joint Dog Chews, uses UC-II collagen and omega-3 fatty acids to promote joint mobility and help maintain normal inflammatory responses. Omega-3 fatty acids provide additional anti-inflammatory support that can benefit overall joint health in both cats and dogs!



During the holidays, many festive foods can be tempting to share, but only a few are truly safe for pets. Plain, cooked turkey or chicken (without skin, bones, seasoning, or gravy) can be offered in small amounts to both cats and dogs. Cooked vegetables such as carrots, green beans, and sweet potatoes—served plain and unseasoned—are also safe treats. For dogs, small pieces of apple (no seeds) or pumpkin purée (100% pumpkin, not pie filling) can be a healthy option. Cats may enjoy a small taste of plain, cooked fish. Always avoid foods containing chocolate, onions, garlic, grapes, raisins, xylitol, alcohol, or excessive fat, and remember that treats should make up only a small part of your pet's diet to keep the holidays happy and healthy.

***Uh oh! Your pet ate something they shouldn't have?
Call the Pet Poison Helpline at (855) 764-7661!***

Cabin fever gotcha down? Here are a few things to help with enrichment while we enter cooler months!



For dogs, owners can use puzzle feeders, snuffle mats, and treat-dispensing toys to encourage problem-solving and slow, engaging meals. Short, positive training sessions—such as practicing basic cues or learning new tricks—provide mental stimulation and strengthen the human-animal bond. Indoor scent games, like hiding treats around the home or playing “find it,” tap into a dog’s natural instincts and help burn energy. When space allows, hallway fetch, stair climbs (for healthy dogs), and supervised tug games can also provide safe physical exercise.



Cats thrive on activities that mimic natural hunting behaviors. Daily interactive play with wand toys, feather teasers, or small toys that can be chased helps keep cats active and reduces stress. Puzzle feeders and treat balls encourage mental engagement, while rotating toys every few days helps maintain interest. Providing vertical spaces such as cat trees, shelves, or window perches allows cats to climb, observe, and feel secure indoors. Even simple changes—like cardboard boxes, paper bags (handles removed), or new scratching surfaces—can add novelty and enrichment, helping cats and dogs stay content, active, and healthy throughout the winter season.

Looking to stay active with your pet this winter? Tucson offers many wonderful dog-friendly hiking and walking options for pets and their people to enjoy the outdoors together. Popular local favorites include Sweetwater Preserve, Painted Hills Trailhead, and Robles Pass, which offer scenic desert trails suitable for leashed dogs. For flatter, easy strolls, the Rillito River Park and The Loop multi-use path provide miles of accessible walking paths. Catalina State Park and Agua Caliente Park offer a mix of shaded trails and gentle elevation changes, while cooler-weather adventures can be found on Mount Lemmon, where several forested trails welcome dogs on leash.

As always, the team at PAWS Veterinary Center would like to thank you for trusting us with the care of your beloved pets. It is truly an honor to be part of their lives—from playful puppy and kitten visits to supporting them through every stage of adulthood and beyond. Your continued confidence allows us to do what we love most: provide compassionate, high-quality veterinary care while building lasting relationships with our clients and their furry family members. We are grateful to be part of the Tucson community and look forward to many more healthy, happy moments together. Happy holidays and see ya next year!

-PAWS TEAM-