



## In this edition!

Page 1 - How to Support your pet this winter | Page 2 - Why we're rabbiting on about arthritis

### How to support your pet this winter



Brrrr! As the temperature starts to drop, it's important to make sure that our pets stay warm and safe.

#### Dogs

Well-fitted coats and jumpers can help keep dogs warm on walks – this is especially important if you have a senior dog. Drying wet dogs thoroughly after a walk will ensure they don't become cold once they settle down, and extra bedding or blankets can help them to get cosy.

#### Cats

Your cat's bedding should be warm, dry and away from any cold draughts. Make sure they have access to a warm environment, like your home or a heated indoor area.

Take care when using heat sources to warm pets. Hot water bottles should be avoided due to the risk of burns. If you're using pet-specific heat pads, make sure to check them regularly for damage and ensure they aren't too hot before you use them. Cover them well to avoid direct contact with your pet's skin, and never leave a pet unattended with a heat pad.

#### Rabbits and guinea pigs

Outdoor rabbits and guinea pigs may need extra bedding (like dust-free hay). You can use blankets and covers to protect their home from the winter weather and help insulate their hutch. Just make sure they are well-ventilated!

Make sure the indoor area of their housing has a sloped roof so that rain water can drain away, and have their enclosure raised off the ground by at least four inches and positioned away from wind and rain.

You could move their enclosure into a shed or an unused garage – just make sure they have enough time and space to exercise safely.

**We're here to help! If you have any questions about winter pet care, please get in touch.**



### Stay safe and seen this winter

As the nights and early mornings are darker, we need to make our pets as visible as possible to others when outdoors.

Reflective collars can be useful for cats – just make sure that you use a quick-release collar to prevent your feline friend getting stuck or sustaining a collar injury.

When taking your dog out, reflective, or light-up collars, harnesses, leads, coats and vests are a good idea, as they ensure that your canine companion is as visible as possible to drivers and other road users.

You could also consider a bright or reflective coat for yourself, especially if you are going for walks in poorly lit areas. You could even try a head torch, which can help ensure you keep on the path and come in handy when taking your pet to go to the toilet outside!

## Why we're rabbiting on about arthritis

Many humans experience arthritis as they get older, and the same is true for rabbits. The most common form of arthritis in rabbits is osteoarthritis, a type of inflammation that causes pain and stiffness in the joints. While it can be painful and can't be cured as such, your rabbit should still be able to live a full and active life with the right combination of treatments.

Symptoms of osteoarthritis in rabbits include stiffness or wobbling when moving, not being able to eat soft morning stools directly from their bottom, a dirt or urine-soaked bottom, the inability to angle their pelvis properly when weeing (meaning they can't completely empty their bladder), moving around less when it's cold or damp, a reduced appetite and unexplained aggression towards their owner or bonded partner.

If you notice any of these signs or are worried about your rabbit, please contact our team to book an appointment. We can check your rabbit and advise on the best treatment and care options.

Treatment options may include:

- Weight management.
- Putting coverings on slippery floors and surfaces to aid movement.
- Providing a litter tray that is low at the front and has no sharp edges.

- Keeping your rabbit warm in cold and damp weather.
- Providing ramps or steps to get up to hutches.
- Ensuring they have plenty of space to do gentle exercise.
- Giving them things to play with and lots of environmental and feeding enrichment.
- It's also a good idea to keep an eye on your rabbit's bottom, groom them regularly and maintain regular treatment against flystrike.

**For further advice and support, please reach out to our team.**

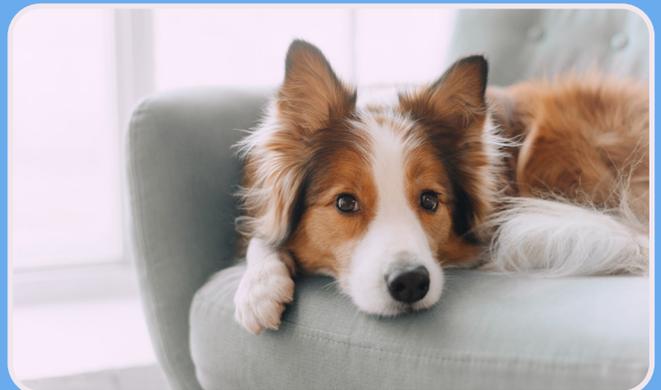


## Body Condition Matters!

Pets with a healthy shape and good body condition have more energy, better mobility and a reduced risk of disease.

As we kick off 2026, we're focusing on how your pet looks and feels, not the number on the scale. Our team will be happy to show you how to check your pet's shape at home and offer advice tailored to their personal needs.

Strong, fit and balanced — let's keep your pet in great shape. **To book a body shape consultation with our friendly team, please contact the practice.**



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