



## **WINTER SAFETY TIPS**

Winter's cold air brings lots of concerns for responsible potbellied pig owners. Remember wind chill makes days colder than actual temperature readings. A potbellied pig is not protected by fur; whether your pet lives exclusively outdoors or spends little time outside, adequate shelter is a necessity. An insulated pig house, perhaps with a heat source on the coldest days, is a must for any pig outside. Be sure and keep your pig warm, dry, and away from drafts in your house.

This time of year your pig will snuggle up in a warm, dry blanket and rug, whether she lives inside or outside. To prevent frostbite on your pig's ears, tail and feet, do not leave your indoor pig outside for too long. Be extra careful when walking your pig near frozen areas. Potbellies can slip and be seriously injured. Since your pig does not have much hair for protection against winter's cold, a coat or sweater can provide the warmth your pig needs.

It takes more energy in the winter to keep body temperature regulated, so you might need to provide your pig additional calories if she spends a lot of time outdoors. Towel or blow dry your pig if he gets wet from rain or snow. To avoid tiny cuts and cracked pads, it is important to clean and dry his hooves, too.

Do not leave your pig alone in a car. It gets too cold and carbon monoxide from a running engine is very dangerous.

## **HEALTH TIPS**

Pigs cannot tell us when they are sick, so it is important to pay special attention to your pig's condition during the winter season. Antifreeze, which often collects on driveways and in garages, is highly poisonous. Although it may smell and taste good to your pig, it can be lethal.

Rock salt, used to melt ice on sidewalks, may irritate foot pads. Be sure to rinse and dry your pig's feet after a walk.

Your pig is just as likely to get dehydrated in the winter as in the summer; therefore be sure and provide him plenty of freshwater. Snow is not a satisfactory substitute for water.

To prevent frostbite on your pig's ears, tails, and feet, do not leave your pig outdoors for too long. Be very careful of supplemental heat sources. - Fireplaces, portable heaters, and heat lamps can severely burn your pig. Make sure all fireplaces have screens and keep all heaters and -lamps away from bedding and from your pig.

Like all of us, pigs seem more susceptible to illness in the winter. Do make sure to take your pig to a veterinarian if you see any suspicious symptoms. Be sure and consult your veterinarian before administering any over-the-counter medications.

## **HOLIDAY SAFEGUARDS**

The winter season brings lots of fun holiday activities, but households with pigs must take special precautions. The holidays are not ideal for introducing a pet into your family. A new pig requires extra attention and a stable environment, which the holiday season doesn't permit. Also, a pet pig is not a toy or gift that can be returned. Instead, NAPPA suggests giving a wrapped picture of the pet to come.

- Holly, mistletoe and poinsettia plants are among several poisonous plants that might tempt your pig. You should make sure they are kept in places your pig cannot reach.
- Review holiday gifts for your pig to make sure they are safe.
- Protect your pig from an unattended tree.
- Holiday lights may burn, frayed electrical cords may shock or electrocute, glass ornaments may break and cut, and edible ornaments and inedible tinsel may be too much of a temptation for your pig. Whether your tree is live or artificial, both kinds of needles are sharp and indigestible.
- Never leave your pig unattended with your tree.
- Your pig can smell right through those brightly wrapped packages. Be sure to screen them for something that smells good or is edible. Alcohol and chocolate are toxic for pigs. Keep all seasonal goodies out of reach.
- The holiday season is a stressful time for pigs. Try to keep a normal schedule during all the excitement.