

doggy daycare and spa

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January 2009 Newsletter

Coats for Canines

During the month of January, you can donate a coat for a dog in need by dropping one off at Gone 2 the Dogs in Old Town. Everyone who donates will receive a \$5 coupon for a purchase at Gone 2 the Dogs. The coats will be donated to local rescue groups and shelters to provide extra warmth for elderly dogs or dogs who needed to be shaved because of excessive matting.

Tips from the Spa

Keeping your dog well groomed during the winter months is just as important as any other time of year.

- Trimming the excess hair in between toes and pads keeps ice and snow from building up and makes your dog more comfortable when walking outside in the snow.
- Itchy skin can be relieved by an oatmeal bath and conditioning treatment. If your dog is particularly itchy, putting a humidifier on your furnace or near your dog's sleeping area will help keep their skin from feeling so dry. (Doesn't your skin get drier during the cold winter months?)
- Removing undercoat from double coated dogs keeps them more comfortable in the winter as well as in the summer.
- Regular grooming allows Racheal to spot any abnormal lumps, bumps or colorations on your dog's skin and body.
- Most dogs will benefit from professional grooming every 6-8 weeks. Most breeds should be brushed at home at least once a week and dogs who easily mat, once a day. Designate a special spot for grooming so that your dog knows what to expect.

Under the Weather?

Please remember that anytime your dog shows any symptoms of not feeling well (ie. coughing, excessive sneezing, runny eyes and nose, vomiting, diarrhea) please keep him or her home from Daycare just as you would your child from school. It is our number one priority to maintain a safe, fun, and healthy environment for your dog to come and play. You will never, ever be charged for calling your dog in sick.

Good Dog! Training will be starting a new class each week this month. Group classes with your dog help to cement the human-dog bond and help you both brush up on basic obedience. Classes also offer a perfect remedy for Cabin-Fever during these cold weather months. Class fliers are available in our reception area and online at www.janetasmith.com.

Dog Food 101

One of our favorite subjects to cover in our newsletter has to do with diet and nutrition. At Doggy Daycare and Spa, we believe that we are all what we eat. (Lately, we've all been a bunch of Christmas Cookies ☺). We believe in the importance of researching dog food and providing high quality diets for our beloved pets. Many foods on the market today are gluten with

fillers, sugars, by-products and other things we thought you would prefer we not mention. Many of the most popular, highly advertised brands are the worst when it comes to the quality of their kibble. Just because the advertising and packaging is pretty, the ingredients and process in making the food many times are not.

It wasn't long ago that dogs ate what we ate. If we had stew, they had stew along with the stew bone. If we had pot pie, so did they. Their diets were balanced, like ours. In today's convenience oriented society where "time is money" it is near impossible to fix ourselves an "at home meal", let alone cook for our dogs! Just as we thrive on Subway on the run, the convenience of kibble and canned food is important for our dogs in ensuring they receive the proper nutrition.

What we think every dog owner should know when buying dog food:

1. **Read the label.** We believe that if you think to yourself "I would NEVER eat that" then you shouldn't feed it to your dog.
 - A. A popular dog food has beef by-products, pork by-products and poultry by-products on their list of ingredients, PLUS the food also includes "meat by-products." What is the meat? We'll be honest... you do not want to know.
 - B. What actually are by-products? Animal by-products may contain intestines, lungs, spleen, livers, kidneys, brains, blood, bone, stomachs, beaks, feathers, and feet. They can come from "4D" animals... Dead, Dying, Disabled, or Diseased.
2. **Be aware of the amount of artificial coloring added to food.** The more color, the lesser the quality, we believe. Just because it is round and green, don't be fooled, it is not a pea.
3. **Know that corn has no nutritional value and is used only as a filler.** Many dogs have allergies to corn, wheat & wheat by-products, soy, and other common ingredients in commercial food. If your dog is excessively licking their feet, prone to chronic ear infections and/or having skin issues, look at their diet. Some brands carry Allergy formulas with unique proteins and minimal ingredients to help control food allergies.
4. **The first ingredient on the label is the most dominate ingredient in the recipe.** However, if a food lists several different kinds of rice, or wheat, or potato in the top 5 ingredients, please know that the food is mostly carbs, even when the protein is the first listed ingredient.
5. **Don't forget treats!** If you wouldn't eat Twinkies for a snack, then why would you want to feed the equivalent to your dog? Once again, read the ingredients. Just because it looks like bacon doesn't mean it is really bacon. At Doggy Daycare and Spa, we only use high quality biscuits for our going-home time treats.
6. **Look at the expiration date on the Bag.** Many pet stores do not rotate stock as often as they should, so many times we will go home with a bag of food and/or treats that is close to their expiration date. Pet foods are particularly prone to stored product pest such as Indian meal worms. If you notice a cobwebby type substance, excessive breaking, or insects of any kind in your dog's food or treats, discard it right away.
7. **At home, do not store dry food in plastic bins or containers unless you will be washing them out thoroughly with hot soapy water between re-fills.** Most foods contain animal fats which are absorbed into the plastic and will go rancid, spoiling fresh food that is put into the container. Food should be stored in its original bag inside whatever container you wish.

Still confused? Do research online. Talk to other pet owners. Discuss food with the team at Soldan's. And of course, consult your dog's Veterinarian.