

# Take extra care of your pets when it rains

Nileena M.S.

**COIMBATORE:** Pet owners and those who run animal shelters find themselves busy during rainy season as pets demand extra care during this time.

"Wet-weather is the time when health ailments among animals are on a rise. We receive more number of cases at the animal clinic during this time of the year," says Mini Vasudevan, managing trustee of Humane Animal Society.

"Many people are forced to leave their pets unattended during work hours. Sometimes, the pets are left locked outside and they might get wet or get dirty in the mud," she says.

According to Veterinarian E.K. Selvaraj, gastroenteritis, characterised by diarrhoea and vomiting, is a common ailment found among dogs

- **Cages and feeding utensils should be kept clean**
- **Vaccination can prevent many diseases**

and cats. Leptospirosis is another common disease caused by bacteria which enters the animal's body through wounds or by drinking contaminated water. Fever, loss of appetite for several days, vomiting, lethargy, depression, muscle pain, diarrhoea, or presence of blood in urine in later stages are the common symptoms. It could get worse in advanced stages.

Hygiene is an important factor during damp weather. Extra precaution should be taken against worm infections during this season. Their fur and paws should be cleaned well, Dr. Selvaraj says. Cages and feeding utensils should be kept clean and

dry. Water borne diseases can be prevented by providing clean drinking water and ensuring that they don't wander outside and consume unclean food or water, he says.

V. Divyalakshmi, who owns two cats and a dog (a Labrador), says that taking care of cats is easy. "You just have to give them clean food, milk and a warm place to sleep. But, dogs need more attention to keep them clean. I try to keep them indoors during rainy season," she says.

Veterinarian Viju Vijayan says that skin diseases might trouble animals during the season.

Fungal infection could be identified when we notice itching and hair loss in pets.

According to Dr. Vijayan, proper vaccination can prevent many of these diseases. Puppies above two-month-old should be vaccinated. This can be followed up with a booster dose.

Pet owners should consult a veterinarian before medicating the pets.

Distemper is another viral disease found among canines and felines during all seasons while Parvo is another fatal viral disease. Multi-antigen vaccinations should be administered every year after consulting with a veterinarian, the doctors said.

"Space constraint is one major problem that we face during rainy season," says Nalini Shanmugam, secretary of People For Animals who runs an animal shelter.

Most of the time the animals are confined to the cages, she adds.



*A pet dog being examined by a veterinarian in the city. - PHOTO: M.PERIASAMY*