Salt can Hurt the Feet of Dogs & Cats

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Q. Does sidewalk salt hurt the feet of dogs and cats?

A. Ice melts are available in both liquid and solid forms. They are used to melt ice and snow on slippery sidewalks, roadways and driveways. In many cases the ice melt is simple salt. Although the foot pads of dogs and cats seem fairly tough, salt is still very irritating to them. In addition, some pets may ingest the ice melt as they lick their paws, or may eat it directly off of the ground. In small amounts this could result in drooling and diarrhea. If large amounts are ingested, the pet may show excessive thirst, weakness or fainting due to low blood pressure, decreased muscle function and, in severe cases, seizures, coma and even death.

If you know your pet has been in a heavily-salted area, take a moist towel and clean off the salt. If your pet has very sensitive feet, you may want to consider providing boots for your pet. They come in various styles and sizes. Be sure to measure your pet's foot so you know what size will be best.

On your own walkways and driveways, use a salt-free ice melter. These products, such as Safe Paw, contain nontoxic granules, which will not burn or injure your pet's paws like ice melters that contain salt.

*Unauthorized use of any images, thumbnails, illustrations, descriptions, article content, or registered trademarks of **Foster & Smith, Inc.** is strictly prohibited under copyright law. Site content, including photography, descriptions, pricing, promotions, and availability are subject to change without notice. These restrictions are necessary in order to protect not only our copyrighted intellectual property, but also the health of pets, since articles or images that are altered or edited after download could result in misinformation that may harm companion animals, aquatic life, or native species.*