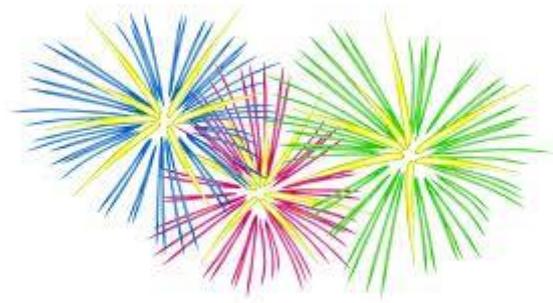


Remember Remember the 5th of November

... And several weeks before and after and Christmas and New Year...As the firework season seems to get longer each year.

This can be such a stressful time for both pets and their owners.



Is Your Dog Afraid Of Fireworks?

Help is at hand....

If our dogs don't experience loud noises as pups, they often are unable to cope with novel frightening sounds such as fireworks or loud engine noises as they get older. Some breeds are more sensitive to others. Ignored, noise phobias tend to get worse with time, not better, so you really need to act to help your dog if he's scared of fireworks.

When the event is imminent:

- Don't fuss or try to reassure your dog when it is scared as this will simply reward the fearful behaviour.
- Remember "ignore unwanted fearful behaviour, but reward calm behaviour"
- Don't ever punish your dog when he is scared as this only confirms that there is something of which to be afraid.
- Do ignore the noises themselves and try to keep your dog busy with some form of active game.
- Do feed a small but stodgy high carbohydrate meal (e.g. pasta, potato, rice) in the mid to late afternoon. This will help make him feel calm and sleepy during the evening. Make sure you take him outside to the toilet before it gets dark and the fireworks start!
- Do make sure the dog is kept in a safe and secure environment at all times so that it doesn't bolt and escape if a sudden noise occurs.
- Before dark, make sure your dog is in a familiar but blacked out room that contains his toys and other favourite objects. Blacking out the room removes the additional problem of flashing lights which often accompany the noise. Turn up the volume of the radio or television.

- Do provide a refuge for your dog to hide in, for example blankets thrown over the back of the settee to form a dark safe place.
- Don't leave your dog alone as he may panic and injure himself.
- If you know of a dog that is not scared by these noises who gets on well with the problem dog, try keeping them together during these evenings may help. Playing with the non-fearful dog may help the other dog to relax.

Helpful Products

There are many helpful products on the market, but they must be used in conjunction with behaviour therapy to have any success.

We have available Adaptil, a plug-in diffuser, spray or collar that can comfort your dog and help him cope with his fears. It produces a scent that only your dog can smell, and mimics the pheromone produced by bitches when they suckle their pups. The effect is not immediate, so the diffuser needs to be plugged in continually for up to 2 weeks before the scary event.

ZYLKENE is a natural palatable product given with food to help reduce your pet's anxiety levels. Zylkene should also be started before the anticipated series of fearful events.

Both **ADAPTIL** and **ZYLKENE** can help your pet manage firework stress, but also can facilitate any training programmes to help your dog deal with its fear of noise in the future. They can both be given in combination with any prescribed 'Anti Anxiety' medications...

These Products are available at Reception without a veterinary prescription

ANTI ANXIETY MEDICATIONS: For severely affected pets we can prescribe various medicines. Depending on the chosen drug, your dog may need to start these tablets some time before the fearful event. Please contact the surgery for advice.

Remember that if **Diazepam** (Valium) is prescribed it may well help reduce fear during the fireworks but causes short term memory loss so although it may help stop the cycle of fear becoming worse, it cannot be used as part of a noise desensitisation programme as the dog will not remember the event!

Don't forget fireworks happen every year... and it is likely that your dog's fear will get worse each time. Why not think ahead to next year (fireworks are no longer confined to November 5!) and prepare in advance?

If your dog has extreme noise phobia, please contact **Park Vets**. We can arrange an extended consultation and explain the principles of Noise Desensitisation.

Information sheets on **Noise Desensitisation** and **CDs** of Firework noise are available at Reception. Although this programme requires major owner commitment, it will certainly reap dividends for the well-being of your pet.

Please ask at reception if you have any queries or concerns. We realise that this can be an extremely distressing time for our more sensitive pets.

Useful Websites:

www.adaptil.com/uk

www.zylkenepet.co.uk

More Problems

Recently brought to our attention:

Over Hallowe'en and Bonfire night, children love the luminous necklaces and other luminous paraphernalia.

If chewed the chemicals in these can be irritant and painful. They cause excess salivation / foaming at the mouth and can cause hyperactivity and even aggression. They are of low toxicity but best avoided of course. Again be aware and be prepared!

"Park Vets - caring for your pets 24 hours a day"

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