

Fireworks Anxiety

With the upcoming fireworks season, here are some suggestions to help prevent anxiety and stress for your pet. If he/she usually needs some calming TLC, or a possible prescription, please help us to serve you by calling well ahead of time for an appointment. **If you just need to refill an anxiety medication/herbal, your veterinarian must have examined your pet within the last 12 months.** For new prescription medications or new herbal prescriptions, an examination will be necessary.

- Adaptil pheromone collars & diffusers release an appeasing pheromone that is naturally calming for dogs. When used in a quieter and contained part of the house like the basement or a bathroom they can be very effective.
- Many people find that their pet responds to the Bach flower essence called Rescue Remedy.
- “White” noise like a fan, radio or T.V. may help reduce the intensity of the fireworks.
- If your pet is food motivated and enjoys toys, try treat-dispensing toys like stuffed Kongs, Buster Cubes, etc. This serves as a form of distraction and helps redirect attention away from the anxiety. Peanut butter, baby food (meat without onion or garlic added for flavoring), canned cheese, or canned food may be frozen inside Kong toys to help make the distracting ability last longer.
- Thundershirts and Anxiety Wraps are a great way to help a pet with anxiety, and can be purchased at local pet boutiques and online (Anxiety Wraps are available at our office).
- Peppermint extract (the kind used for baking, NOT the essential oils – as these can be toxic) rubbed on the footpads can help reduce anxiety.
- Lavender aromatherapy can also be helpful.

If these measures don't help enough for your pet's level of anxiety, please schedule an appointment as soon as possible to avoid the rush! Both sedatives and herbals are best used prior to the anticipated anxiety stimulus, and a day or two of “trial” is helpful for dosing adjustments. Some of the herbals used for anxiety require several days to really establish a calming effect, so starting before the holiday is best. When using any calming herbals or medications, please plan to stay home with your pet to supervise them and to ensure their safety. **Please** don't ever leave your dog unattended outside during fireworks season. Some dogs get so frightened they run away, increasing their chance for injury.

And finally, if anxiety or fear with noises is an ongoing problem, please consider incorporating some training into the daily routine for the holiday fireworks and beyond. We can recommend trainers to help you with this or provide a referral to the local veterinary behaviorist. For more information please visit VeterinaryPartner.com and follow the link to Canine Behavior Series, then Fireworks Phobia. Please feel free to call if you have any further questions or concerns.

**From all of us at Two Rivers Veterinary Clinic,
Have a safe and happy Fourth of July!**