

not be handled. Tablets can be crushed between two spoons and tipped into the mouth (it is absorbed through the mucous membranes), or dissolved in water and administered by syringe. The appropriate dose should be discussed with your vet.

The tablets should be given when the symptoms start. The expected response is a reduction in anxiety levels and a more relaxed pet that may well go to sleep. If a positive response is not seen within 10 minutes then the dose may be repeated up to three times. If the symptoms subside but then recur, the dose may be repeated.

Medical Treatment

Some pets' reactions are so severe that they may require a sedative, which may only be dispensed after discussion with your vet. This should be considered as a last resort.

As with any treatment this is not addressing the underlying cause of your pet's distress, and advice should always be sought about desensitising your pet – this means the problem will be solved once and for all.

The Drove Veterinary Hospital has a fully qualified Dog Behaviour Counsellor, Christine Emerson, on its team, who is available for advice and one to one counselling or training. Call her on 079747 24463 to book an appointment.

Drove Veterinary Hospital
252 Croft Road, Swindon, Wilts SN1 4RW
01793 522483 (24 hours)
www.drovevets.co.uk

Branch Surgeries

Abbey Meads Branch Surgery
Elstree Way, Abbey Meads,
Swindon, Wilts SN25 4YX
01793 728728

Marlborough Branch Surgery
51 London Road, Marlborough, Wilts SN8 2AJ
01672 512043

Moredon Branch Surgery
10 Moredon Road, Moredon, Swindon, Wilts SN25 3DQ
01793 614461

Stratton Branch Surgery
Unit 6, Hobley Drive, Swindon, Wilts SN3 4NS
01793 821821

Taw Hill Branch Surgery
26 Aiken Rd, Taw Hill, Swindon, Wilts SN25 1UH
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surviving the
fireworks
season



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Managing stress caused by fireworks.

As the season for fireworks gets ever longer, many animals suffer from acute stress caused by the loud noises associated with them.

Some animals are affected so severely that they seem to have “*panic attacks*”, symptoms of which can include shaking, hiding, vocalizing and loss of toilet training. Ideally, puppies should be desensitized (learning to be calm in that situation) to all sorts of noises and events in their initial ‘learning window’ between 5 and 12 weeks, whereby anything they learn in this period of time tends to stay with them into adulthood. However, there are many pets that have not had this opportunity.

The best way to manage this problem is to invest in some time before the season starts and work on getting your pet used to the kind of noises that they are likely to experience. The Drove Veterinary Hospital sells some CDs which contain tracks of firework noises. It is important to follow the instructions carefully, or to seek advice from a qualified behaviourist before initiating any program of desensitisation.

There are other ways you can help your pet to cope with this time of year. As the season draws on, you should try and keep your pet indoors whenever you think there may be fireworks in your area.



Create the right environment

You can draw the curtains, make sure all windows are shut, and have the TV, radio or a fan on to try and drown out the noise. Music should not be loud but that with a strong drum beat is ideal, or turn up the bass a little on your stereo, as this masks the noise more effectively. It is very important that they are not able to escape if frightened.

Most animals like to have a space in which they feel safe. This can be provided either by a purpose built crate, which should be covered on three sides by a blanket, or by providing an appropriately sized cardboard box. These should be placed in a secure place where the pet will not be bothered.

It is important that you do not try and comfort your pet too much if they display signs of fear – this only reinforces their belief that there is something to be afraid of. For the same reason, you should never punish your pet for being nervous. Instead, remain calm, and try to ignore your pet

if it comes to you for reassurance. You can try and engage your pet in a game to avert their attention. For dogs, you can try having a doggie friend come visit, as long as they are not also frightened of fireworks. Try giving your dog a long walk in the afternoon, so that they are more likely to be tired in the evening.

There are products available from The Drove Veterinary Hospital that can help your pet relax. For dogs, there is a product called DAP (*Dog Appeasing Pheromone*), which comes in a spray, collar or plug in version. This contains a synthetic pheromone that reproduces the pheromone released by a lactating mother, which calms and reassures her puppies. The feline version of this product is called *Feliway*, and also comes as a spray and plug in. These can be used for a variety of behavioural issues, not just fear of fireworks. There is also an excellent product for stress called ‘*Zylkene*’, great for those fearful of noise and has no side-effects.

It is possible to use homeopathic remedies, in particular *Aconite*, to help your pet, under the supervision of your vet. You must be a registered client for us to be able to dispense the *Aconite*, and we would prefer that we have seen your pet within the last six months. We provide a free consultation with the express purpose of deciding if *Aconite* would be suitable for your pet.

Aconite should be stored in a cool dry place, away from light and strong smelling substances. Wherever possible it should