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Fireworks Night



For many dogs and their owners, the annual onset of fireworks brings days of misery and distress. The most common signs of fear exhibited are:

- Panting
- Trembling
- Cowering
- Hiding
- Seeking owners attention
- Climbing or digging

Fortunately help is at hand. There are 3 main ways to help:

- Calming tablets
- Desensitisation
- D.A.P Diffuser

Calming Tablets

These work by making your dog more 'chilled out' so they care less about the bangs. They are usually quite effective and last a few hours. The main disadvantage is that they must be administered prior to the onset of the distress, which is not always possible. Also it is not ideal to have to use them for a few days on the trot. **Not all dogs can be given these medications for health reasons.**

Desensitisation

This involves gradual exposure of your dog to the sounds of fireworks under controlled conditions. It is possible to purchase Cd's of the sounds – these all come with instruction booklets. This is a long term solution to the problem – unfortunately it is too late this year to use this method to full effect, but if you get cracking now your dog may well cope much better next year. See the "sounds scary" website: www.soundtherapy4pets.com

D.A.P. Diffuser

Dog Appeasing Pheromones (D.A.P.) are secreted by a lactating bitch and serve to reassure the puppies especially in times of stress. It has been shown that this appeasing effect still works in some adult dogs. This is the basis for the D.A.P diffusers and they have been used successfully in combating firework phobias.

Tips for a stress-free firework season...

Two weeks before the event

Plug in a D.A.P. diffuser in the room that your dog uses to relax and rest. Leave it plugged in, both day and night.

Make up a small space for your dog to be in if he/she gets worried. An indoor kennel covered with a duvet to dull noise or a very small room with no window is ideal.

Dos and don'ts for the day of the event

1. *Do not* punish your dog for being scared – this will only reinforce the behaviour.
2. *Do not* fuss or overly reassure your dog when he is scared, I know this is hard but this only emphasises to your dog that there is something to worry about.
3. *Do* put on music with lots of constant drum beats – it doesn't have to be loud.
4. *Do* ignore the bangs yourself and play with your dog.
5. *Do* draw the curtains as blacking out the room will minimize further distress from flashing lights.
6. *Do* ensure the room is safe and secure so your dog can't bolt and escape if a sudden noise occurs.
7. *Do not* take your dog outside while the fireworks are going on.

After the event

Leave the D.A.P diffuser plugged in for another week.

A recent survey has shown that 70% of owners were satisfied or very satisfied with the result.

At Hope Vets we like to treat every dog as an individual, as not all firework treatments work for all dogs. Please ring us on 01442 833 198 to book your Firework consult.