

## Companion Animal Newsletter - November 2017

# FIREWORK FEARS

Bonfire night kick starts the main firework season with Christmas and New Year celebrations closely following on behind. Although great to watch, fireworks cause a stressful and frightening time for many of our pets due to their acute senses.

### Common signs of fear in a cat can include:

- Covering and hiding behind furniture
- Trying to run away or escape
- Soiling in the house
- Refusing to eat
- Overgrooming

### Common signs of fear in a dog can include:

- Trembling and shaking
- Climbing onto owners
- Barking excessively
- Covering and hiding behind furniture
- Trying to run away
- Soiling in the house
- Pacing/panting or digging up the carpet
- Refusing to eat

When an animal becomes stressed or scared they may seek a secure place to hide. Creating a den several weeks in advance allows your pet to become familiar with the refuge. The den may be under the bed or stairs, behind the sofa or under a table. Cats are more comfortable in high places. We advise the area is located in a dark, quiet area, perhaps a room with heavy curtains or no windows. Allowing your dog or cat easy access to and from the den will decrease anxiety in many circumstances. To promote good feelings about the refuge feed your pet in the area and provide toys to create a safe and pleasant place to be.

'Sound de-sensitisation' is a common method used to expose pets to the noise of fireworks. This training method works by introducing your pet to a tiny and low volume amount of the sound they are frightened of and then gradually increasing this exposure and volume over a period of time. It can be a long process, taking several months but the results are rewarding.

Along with creating a safe refuge area we suggest using a **Pet Remedy** plug in diffuser in the room your pet uses the most. **Pet Remedy** works with your pets own natural calming mechanisms by mimicking gamma amino butyric acid (GABA) which is a natural



calming agent found in mammals, reptiles and birds. **Pet Remedy** is also available as a spray, this allows it to be used on bedding or even on a bandana on your pets collar.

**Zylkene** contains casein which is a natural product derived from milk. It is a molecule which is well known to promote the relaxation of newborns. **Zylkene** should be administered at least three days before the event is expected and continue throughout the firework season.

**Nutracalm** is also a supplement used to decrease stress and anxiety in pets. **Nutracalm** contains:

- GABA: A neurotransmitter in the brain and is responsible for relaxing the nervous system.
- L-theanine: An amino acid component of green tea and is involved in dopamine neurotransmitter function.
- L-tryptophan: A natural amino acid found in many proteins which is involved in the production of the hormone serotonin.
- Passiflora Incarnata: Commonly known as passion flower and widely known for its relaxation properties.
- B Vitamins: Helps to promote the integrity and function of neurotransmitters within the brain.

For optimal benefit administer nutracalm 1-2 hours before desired effect.

Anxiety shirts such as the **Thundershirt** have been shown to have a dramatic effect on anxious, fearful or over excited animals. It applies a constant pressure to the torso of your pet which is similar to a permanent hug!



### \*NEW PRODUCT\*

**Sileo** is a rapid-acting anti-anxiety oral treatment. It produces good calming effects in 7 out of 10 dogs with noise fear. Book your dog in for a vet consultation and a supply of this prescription-only medication.

If you have any questions regarding your pet and the firework season, please do not hesitate to contact the surgery for further advise on 01729 823538.

## FIREWORK FEARS TOP TIPS

- Ignore unusual behaviour such as panting, shaking or whining. If your pet comes to you for reassurance, give them affection but no more than usual.
- Do not punish or get angry with your pet, this will only increase their anxiety.
- Ensure your pet is in a safe and secure environment at all times so they are unable to bolt and escape.
- Pull the curtains and switch on the TV or radio to dull the noise from the fireworks.
- Walk your dog earlier in the day before the fireworks are likely to start.
- Feed a meal which is high in carbohydrates as this will make your pet sleepy.



## BE SAFE BE SEEN



Daylight is quickly disappearing as we head into the long months of winter which makes walking our dogs in the dark unavoidable.

Reflective clothing is available for both humans and pets. When illuminated by a light source the clothing becomes highly visible, essential when walking on poorly lit highways.

Light up collars and lights which can attach to collars are an excellent way to remain visible on walks.

We have a selection of reflective clothing as well as light up collars and collar attachments available at the surgery.

## MICROCHIP MADNESS

**It is essential that the details registered to your pets microchip are kept up to date.**

Scared of losing the one you love?



Over 20% of vets couldn't reunite dogs with owners due to incorrect information on the microchip database

Keep your details up to date on the microchip database

For more information visit [www.bva.co.uk/microchipping](http://www.bva.co.uk/microchipping)

Dog designed by Freepik



During the past months several dogs which had been found unaccompanied by an owner in the area have been brought into the surgery. The dogs were scanned and found to be microchipped. However only 3 of the dogs microchips were up to date!

Please ensure your pets microchipping details are kept up to date. If you require any information how to do this please contact the surgery on 01729 823538.

## WILDLIFE

If you are hosting a bonfire make sure you have inspected the stack before lighting, looking for wildlife such as hedgehogs and frogs which are attracted to snug, sheltered dens such as piles of leaves, sticks and branches.



Feeding wild birds in your garden can be very rewarding however it is a responsibility to maintain the level of food available, especially during the autumn and winter months. Birds become partially reliant on humans feeding them and at this time of year they require higher levels of nutrition to maintain body condition for the colder months ahead. Always remember to leave a fresh water source - particularly during winter months.



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