



Fears and phobias of fireworks and loud noises are common, especially in dogs. Careful planning in the weeks before and after fireworks season can help your pet cope. There are 3 ways proven to help dogs cope with the stress caused by fireworks:

- Short term and long term behavioural management
- Support with pheromones (e.g. Adaptil) and complementary feeds (e.g. Zylkène)
- Anxiolytic/amnesiac drugs prescribed by a vet for animals with more severe phobias



Short Term Behavioural Management:

- Walk your dog whilst it's still light outside and then keep them inside.
- Provide a hiding place or den where they can feel safe.
- Muffle the sounds of fireworks – close doors, windows and curtains and put on the TV or radio. Maybe provide a toy or chew as a distraction.
- Ignore fearful behaviour, such as panting, shaking and whining. Try not to leave your pet alone during this time, but stay calm and don't get angry with them.

Long Term Behavioural Management:

Sound desensitisation is proven to help many pets with sound related problems, by teaching them a different behavioural response. Desensitisation involves exposing your pet to the stressful sound in a controlled manner whilst they are relaxed and occupied with a treat or toy. This method involves the use of CDs pre-recorded with a variety of sounds such as fireworks and thunder, such as the **"Sounds Scary CD"**. Sound desensitisation is started in the weeks before or after fireworks season.

Pheromones and Complementary Feeds:

- **Adaptil** is a synthetic copy of the natural appeasing pheromone the mother dog produces to comfort and reassure her puppies. It has been scientifically proven to help both puppies and adult dogs cope in stressful situations. The diffuser plug-in placed at floor level is particularly effective.
- **Zylkène** is a natural product, derived from casein, the protein in milk, and has been shown to have a calming effect for many dogs and cats. The capsules should be started 1-2 days before fireworks are expected and continued throughout the fireworks season.

Drug-therapy: Reserved for dogs with severe phobias, medications such as diazepam may be prescribed by a vet. Diazepam reduces/prevents anxiety as well as reducing memories of scary events. A dog's general health and the potential for side effects must be considered before diazepam is prescribed.

To discuss the best treatment for your pet and how to implement a sound desensitisation programme such as the **"Sounds Scary CD"** please make an appointment with one of our nurses or give us a call on **01280 703451**

