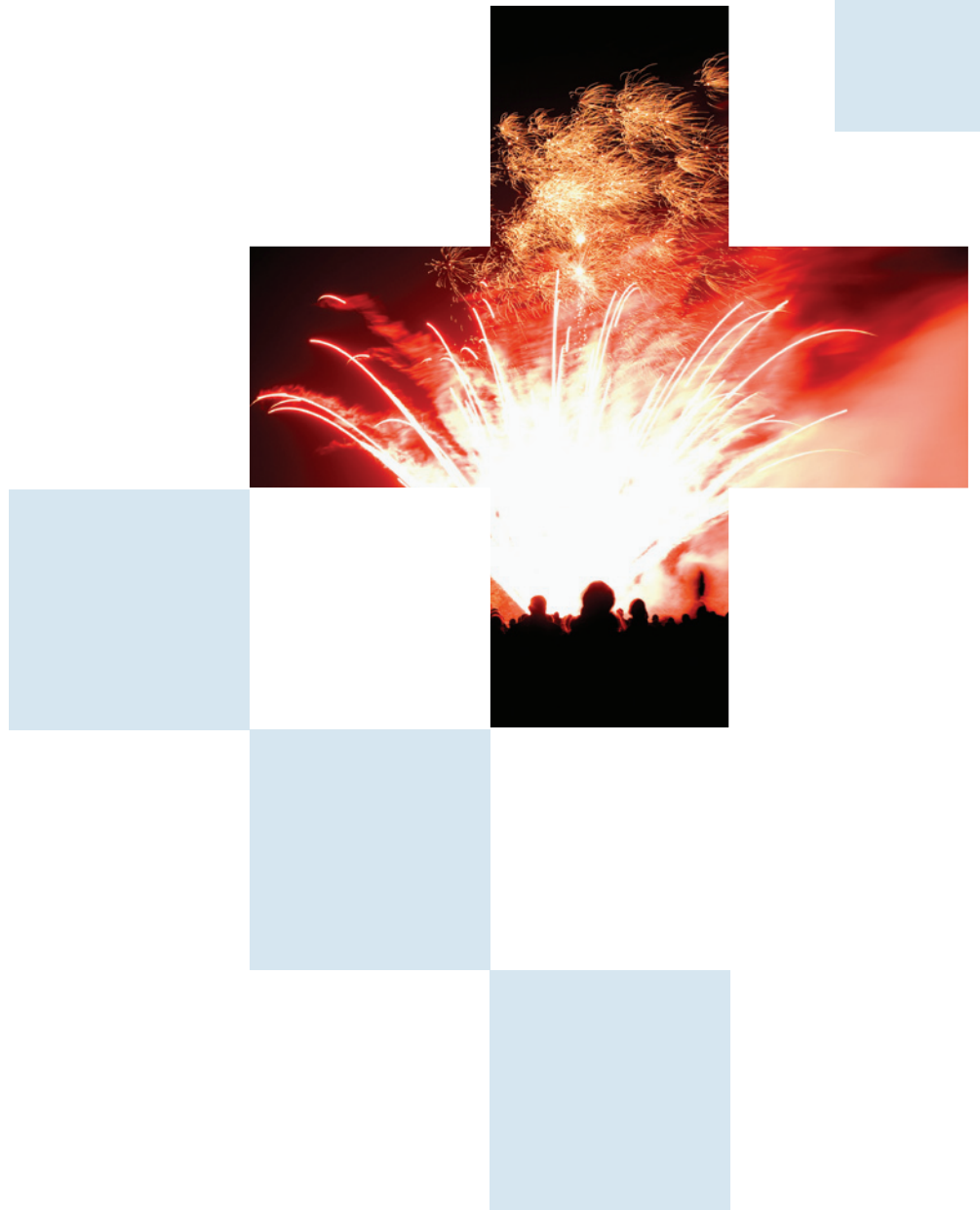


General Practice Service  
Willows Information Sheets

# Firework advice for dogs





### Firework advice for dogs

If your dog is afraid of fireworks, you will be familiar with fearful behaviours such as trembling and panting. Some dogs like hiding in small spaces, others prefer to keep close to you, and some may even run around barking.

### What can you do in general during the firework season?

- 1 Create a safe den
  - Locate the den in a room where your dog likes to hide or spend time. Ideally, this should be away from external windows. Close the curtains and shut the windows to reduce the impact of the fireworks
  - Allow your dog the freedom to access and leave the den at all times
  - Make the den as small as possible and provide soft bedding to make him/her feel cosy
  - Cover the sides of the den with blankets or a duvet to muffle the sound of loud fireworks
  - Try making a small entrance e.g. with a flap of carpet to allow your dog to push its way through
  - Make the den a place where bad experiences do not happen (do not put your dog in the den as punishment) It should be a place where good things happen regularly such as treats, chews, fuss, meals
- 2 Plug in a DAP (Dog Appeasing Pheromone) diffuser or use a DAP collar at least two weeks before the firework season. These release calming pheromones that are imperceptible to humans.
- 3 Keep your dog on a lead during walks, and ensure that the collar is well fitted. Avoid late afternoon and evening walks.

### What can you do while firework displays are actually occurring?

- 1 Follow your normal routine as closely as possible. Do not act differently. Try to ignore the fireworks completely. Even over-acting being relaxed can make a dog more fearful!
- 2 Soothing your dog is not advisable as it can give the impression that there is something to be scared of, and may even reward fearful behaviour. Your dog may also become dependent on you during stressful times, which will make him/her more scared when you are absent.
- 3 Do not punish fearful behaviour.
- 4 Try playing moderately loud music with a good beat to mask the firework sound.
- 5 Ensure that external doors and windows are securely closed to prevent escape.

### What medication and supplements are available?

The following over-the-counter supplements may help ease anxiety: Zylkene, Serene-UM, Scullcap and Valerian tablets or Bach rescue remedy.

In some cases, it may be better for one of our vets to prescribe short-term anti-anxiety medication.

### Desensitisation and the long-term solution...

The simplest technique is to play a CD with firework sounds e.g. SoundScary CD from [www.soundtherapy4pets.com](http://www.soundtherapy4pets.com). Initially, the CD is played on low volume which does not cause any alarm to the dog. Week by week, the volume is gradually increased so that your dog becomes used to loud firework noises.

***If you further advice, please do not hesitate to [contact us](#).***

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