

Fireworks!

We are rapidly approaching firework season again. Firework fear and noise phobias are a common problem in our pets (at least 80% of pets are scared of fireworks).

Think about how your pet reacts to loud noises, do they show any of the following behaviour:

- Covering or hiding behind the sofa
- Trying to run away or escape, this can include digging up the carpet.
- Soiling in the house
- Restlessness, e.g. panting/pacing
- Barking incessantly

If they show any of these signs they might need help coping.

What can You do to Help?

On the run up to Bonfire night, **build a den or hiding place** so that your pet has a safe place to hide and feel comfortable. Build it a few weeks before in the room where your pet usually likes to hide and make sure it is away from any windows. Covering the den with a blanket will help to muffle the sounds further. Encourage your dog to use it and make positive associations with the den by putting their treats inside.

Before it gets dark **walk your dog when it's still light outside**. This reduces the possibility of fireworks being set off and your dog becoming worried. Once all your pets are in, ensure all the windows, doors and cat flaps are shut reducing the risk of your pet running off. Drawing the curtains can stop your pet from being startled by flashing lights.

During the display **ignore any unusual behaviours** such as panting, shaking or whining. Often pets will pick up on their owner's worry which can make things worse. Provide distraction such as new toys or chews and put the TV or radio on to mask the noise of the fireworks. Try not to leave your pet alone whilst fireworks are going off and **don't** punish your pet for showing fearful behaviours but if they are frightened then it is OK to comfort them.

How to Help your pet cope with Firework Fears.

Pheromones can help calm your dog and cat.

Using Adaptil® or Feliway® diffusers will help reduce your pet's fearful response to fireworks. 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 dogs cope in stressful situations. Feliway® is a synthetic copy of the pheromone cats leave behind after rubbing their faces against objects in the house; it helps comfort cats in their own territory.



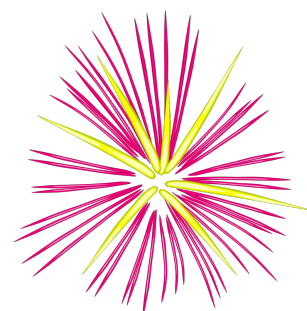
Nutracalm® is specifically formulated to naturally calm anxious pets. Nutracalm is fast acting, with results often evident within 1 hour after taking the capsule.



Giving your pet Zylkene® can help reduce its anxiety, it contains a natural product, derived from casein, a milk protein. Zylkene® has helped a lot of dogs and cats during firework season. Start it at least 3 days before the event is expected.



Please ask a member of staff for further information.



Weight.

Many of the pets that we see daily are unfortunately overweight, and in most of these cases, the owners are unaware of this. Obesity is the most commonly seen nutritional disease of dogs and cats.

Surveys suggest that as many as 40% of dogs and 15% of cats are clinically obese. Obesity may not only reduce your pet's enjoyment of life but several serious clinical problems have been linked with the condition such as osteoarthritis, diabetes mellitus and liver disease to name a few. There is also an increased surgical and anaesthetic risk. So, there are many health benefits to weight loss.

Diagnosis of obesity is simple and does not require specialist equipment. All you need to do is weigh your pet and compare it to the breed average. You should be able to feel your pet's ribs easily but not see them and they should also have a waist. We commonly see the presence of fat pads over the hips and tails and a pendulous abdomen, especially in cats.

Weight gain often goes unnoticed by owners as it can occur gradually over a long period.

Signs that your pet is overweight include.

- Difficulty feeling their ribs/spine
- Difficulty seeing their waist
- Their abdomen is sagging
- You have had to loosen their collar several times over the year
- They often appear tired and lazy
- They lag on walks
- They have difficulty grooming properly

Our nurse weight clinics are free of charge and we can discuss with you your pet's condition. We can set a target for you to achieve over a sensible period. We will discuss what to feed and how much to feed and we will arrange regular appointments for a weigh in to see how you are coping with the weight loss program, and to assess the progress.

So, if you think that you have an overweight pet or you are unsure book in for a weight check with our nurses.

Weight Matters!

Here are 6 simple steps to help your pet lose weight.

1. Know the signs of an overweight pet
2. Visit your vet
3. Monitor the changes of diet
4. Cut out all treats from your dog's diet
5. Plan a regular exercise program
6. Monitor your dog's weight.

Our nurses are happy to help you set up a weight loss programme for your pet, setting a suitable goal for you to achieve and outlining a diet and exercise plan tailored to your lifestyle and your pet's needs. Once reaching the goal set the nurses will discuss with you how to maintain your pet's weight. At this stage you should have a healthier pet that will have reduced the risks of getting weight related health problems.

Contact Us

ikinoxenhamsidmouth.co.uk

Weight Success Stories.

We have a couple of clients that are currently following our nurse's advice and trying to help their pet lose some weight. One, a little Jack Russel called Tigi is very close to getting down to her ideal weight. When Tigi first saw our nurse she was 11% over weight. Tigi needed to lose 0.8kg. Although this doesn't sound like a lot in a little dog this is quite a bit. Tigi has been coming to a weekly weigh-in session for the past 7 weeks and has managed to shed 0.6kg and is currently weighing 7.2kg which is a great achievement. Tigi along with her owner have worked very hard to achieve this and we are delighted that they are doing so well. **Read more online, ikinoxenhamsidmouth.co.uk/advice**