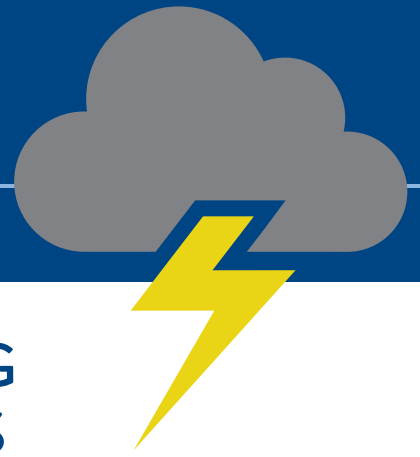


HEALTH TIPS

FROM PENN VET'S BEHAVIOR MEDICINE CLINIC



HELP YOUR DOG FEEL SAFE DURING THUNDERSTORMS AND FIREWORKS

1

DO NOT IGNORE YOUR DOG DURING STORMS

Ignoring a fearful, panicky dog deprives him of whatever comfort and psychological support you can give him. It also leaves him without any information about what he should be doing instead.

2

NEVER PUNISH A DOG BEHAVING FEARFULLY

Do not yell, hold down, squirt with water, jerk the collar, or any other acts perceived as threatening. Punishment only inhibits behavior; it does not calm.

3

ENGAGE IN FUN ACTIVITIES WITH YOUR DOG

This can include playing fetch, chase games, even cuddling and petting, or holding the dog firmly next to you if that comforts him. It may be helpful to have a supply of things they really love to chew like food toys stuffed with really delicious food, frozen marrow, chew sticks, or pig ears.

4

PROVIDE A SAFE HAVEN

Some dogs respond well to having a place to hide and be reasonably secure and comfortable, such as a large closet or bathroom. It's important to teach the dog to go to the safe haven on cue. When storms occur at night, some dogs can be comforted by being allowed in bed with you. Also, some dogs seem comforted by wearing a Thundershirt or Anxiety Wrap.

5

OFFER 'SACRIFICIAL ITEMS'

Some dogs are able to direct their anxiety by destroying items such as cardboard boxes or old phone books. This destructive behavior can function as a way to displace the dog's anxiety onto a pleasurable activity. This is not an option for dogs who would ingest the items, however.

6

MEDICATION

For most dogs with moderate or severe storm phobia, antianxiety medication is essential to manage the dog safely. Panicky dogs can damage homes, injuring themselves in the process.

7

SOUND THERAPY

Competing sounds, like a radio or a white noise machine, may also be helpful.

The goal of managing storm fear is to change the dog's emotional state from frightened and distressed to neutral or even content.



The **Behavior Medicine Clinic at Penn Vet's Ryan Hospital** is dedicated to helping pets and their owners live together comfortably and safely. To schedule an appointment, please call 215-898-3347. For more information, please visit www.vet.upenn.edu.



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