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CVMA Highlights the Value of Minimizing Stress Response in Pets This Summer

Chicago Veterinary Medical Association provides tips for calming pets during storms, fireworks

With summer in full swing, there are a variety of situations and noises that can stir up a troubling stress response in pets. From thunderstorms to fireworks, which aren't only contained to Fourth of July celebrations, these stressful incidents can impact pets all summer long. Minimizing stress in pets during the summer months is crucial for their well-being and overall health.

Fear of these summertime sounds and loud noises in general, can affect both dogs and cats, although dogs are more susceptible. This stress response in pets can manifest in a variety of ways including yawning, whining, panting, paw-licking, chewing, pacing, or hiding. Some pets also may become destructive and destroy things around the home in response to the situation.

"Dogs, in particular, have very sensitive hearing and can often suffer from noise related phobias," explained Dr. Marina Jaworsky, CVMA Board President. "If your pet displays stress-related symptoms during a thunderstorm or fireworks, there are some things you can do to help ease their discomfort."

Some ideas include:

- **Create a Safe Space:** Set up a safe and quiet area indoors where your pet can retreat during storms or fireworks. This could be a cozy corner in a room with soft bedding and familiar items like their favorite toys or blankets.
- **Provide Distractions:** Keep your pet occupied to divert their attention away from the noise outside. Chewing on a bone or playing with a toy can help reduce anxiety.

- **Close Curtains or Blinds:** Blocking out visual stimuli from lightning flashes or fireworks can help reduce your pet's anxiety. Closing curtains or blinds can create a more calming environment indoors.
- **Play Relaxing Music or White Noise:** Playing soothing music or white noise in the background can help mask the sound of thunder or fireworks and create a calming atmosphere for your pet.
- **Stay Calm and Reassuring:** Pets can pick up on their owner's emotions, so it's essential to remain calm during storms or fireworks. Offer gentle words of encouragement and comfort your pet with gentle pats or cuddles if they seek reassurance.

By utilizing these tips and techniques, you can help calm your pet during storms and fireworks, providing them with a sense of security and comfort during stressful situations. For some pets whose anxiety is a significant issue, it is possible that medications can be prescribed. Owners should seek the advice of their veterinary professional to learn if this option is in the best interest of the health and well-being of their pet.

Overall, prioritizing the well-being of pets during storms and fireworks is essential for their safety, health, and happiness. By implementing calming strategies, pet owners can create a supportive environment that fosters resilience and provides emotional stability to their furry companions.



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About the Chicago Veterinary Medical Association: Chicago Veterinary Medical Association is a professional network with a longstanding tradition that connects more than 1,000 veterinarians with comprehensive resources that support their continued development as champions of animal health while encouraging the fostering of the human-animal bond.

About the Chicago Veterinary Medical Foundation: The CVMF, established in 2009, is a 501^(c)(3) charity that works with Chicagoland veterinarians to provide financial assistance to pet families in need by helping with the costs of their pet's urgent, unexpected medical and surgical bills. The Foundation's work plays a vital role in strengthening the human-animal bond by helping sick and suffering pets get well again.