



**Vets Viewpoint - Fireworks Preparation**

For our pets November the 5<sup>th</sup> can be a very frightening experience. A little preparation can help to ensure that bonfire season is as stress free as possible.

**Preparing for Fireworks - Dogs**

- Try to take your dog for a walk before dusk so that they are relaxed and will not need to go out to the toilet once the fireworks start.
- Feed your dog in the mid to late afternoon, as this can also help them relax.
- At dusk, ensure that your dog is safe indoors. Do not leave your dog alone if fireworks are expected
- Provide a safe place your dog can retreat to if they wish but do not shut them in – as long as it is safe, allow your dog to find the place they feel most comfortable – this may be with you or it could be under a bed! You can help by providing a safe “den” such as a dog crate / box covered on three sides and with blankets for them to dig into, well in advance of the event. Encourage your dog to use and make positive associations with the den by putting treats in it.
- Drawing the curtains can stop your dog being startled by flashing lights.
- Playing music or turning up the volume on the television can help to minimise the impact of the sound of the fireworks
- If your dog has never reacted to noises before, try not to react to the sound yourself or simply say in a cheerful voice “that was loud” and then try playing a game or doing some training with them to help form a positive association with the fireworks.
- Do not punish your dog for showing fearful behaviour. If they are frightened then it is OK to comfort them. Contrary to what you will often hear it is not possible to reinforce an emotion such as fear.

**Preparing for Fireworks –  
Small Pets and Birds**

- If your pet lives outside ensure that their cage / aviary is safe and soundproof it as best you can.
- Consider bringing pets inside if possible
- Offer extra bedding for pets to burrow into.

**Preparing for Fireworks – Cats**

- Ensure your cat is safely indoors before dusk and that all windows, doors and cat flaps are secure.
- Even if your cat does not usually use a litter tray make sure that one is available at this time of year.
- Close the curtains to minimise flashes which could frighten your cat
- Putting on music or turning up the volume on the television can help to mask the sound of fireworks
- If your cat seems quite relaxed try playing a game or offering some treats to help form positive associations.
- Ensure your cat has suitable safe places to hide if required (cats will often choose to hide in a dark cupboard or under a bed, so make sure these places are accessible and also offer a selection of boxes in various locations for your cat) Do not try to move them once they have selected a hiding place.

**Microchips** – If your pet should manage to escape in a panic on fireworks night then a microchip could help ensure that you are reunited.

**Pheromones** can also help reduce your dog or cats anxiety. These are available as diffusers which can be plugged in near to your pet’s safe den.

**My Dog was very frightened by fireworks last year – what can I do?**

If your pet has previously shown fear of fireworks or other loud noises then please contact us for advice. Sound phobias can be treated. There are medications which can reduce your pet’s anxiety and behavioural modification can change their reaction to the fireworks.

Tel: 01566 772211 for more advice or to make an appointment with one of our veterinary surgeons.

Finally if you are having a bonfire then make sure that you check for wildlife before lighting it.



## Nurses News - Parrots

- Parrots have a hinged upper and lower beak. Unlike other birds, parrots can raise the upper part of their beaks without moving their whole heads.
- Parrots are the only birds that can lift food to their beaks using their feet.
- Parrots' beaks grow continuously and are worn by eating, chewing wood or grinding the top and bottom parts together.
- Wild parrots use unique signature calls that identify each bird individually. A study found that parrots learn these calls from their parents. Each chick was given a call by its parents which it chirped back at them and continued to use.
- Parrots bond intensely with their owners, occasionally being violent to rivals.
- The male African grey parrot is the most accomplished user of human speech in the animal world.
- Parrots are zygodactyls, meaning they have four toes on each foot, two pointing forward and two projecting backward.
- Some parrots, such as the kakapo are nocturnal. Kakapos are also flightless and the heaviest parrots in the world.
- Many parrot species are monogamous and spend their lives with only one mate. The mates work together to raise their young.
- 66 of the 375 or so species of parrots are threatened by the illegal wildlife trade. Three quarters of the birds taken from the wild to be sold as pets die in transit.



## Repeat Medicine Requests

Please note that if you require a bulk order of repeat medication for your pet (more than one months worth), please allow us at least 48 hours notification so we can ensure we have the drugs in stock.

If you require flea and worm treatments for more than one animal it would be extremely helpful if you could phone us in advance and we can put them up ready for when you come in. This will save you time waiting and also help us during busy periods.

We thank you in advance for your co-operation.

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## Fun Corner

**September Quiz:** How many words did you manage to make from “castle veterinary group”?

**October Quiz:** This month we're testing your general knowledge on all things October:

**If** you were born in October, what would your birthstone be?

**Which** of these flowers is considered to be the flower for October?

**What** traditional holiday do Canadians celebrate in October?

**If** you were born on 3rd October, what would your zodiac sign be?

**If** you were born on 29th October, what would your zodiac sign be?

**Which** President of the United States was born on the 4th of October?

**Which** famous Queen was beheaded on the 16th of October 1793?

**What** war ended on the 19th of October, 1453?

**What** famous fashion item made its debut on the 24th of October 1939?

**Which** state joined the US on the 31st of October, 1864?

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