



KEY WAYS TO HELP RECEIVE YOUR DOG'S SEPARATION ANXIETY

- ✓ Spend time apart from each other.
- ✓ Create a safe space for nap times and relaxation.
- ✓ Discuss behavioral or medication options with your veterinarian.



AFIX LABEL HERE WITH CLING
LOGO/ART

LIST ADDRESS, MAP, HOURS OF
OPERATION, CONTACT INFO
(PHONE, WEBSITE)



1121 Chatham Road
Springfield IL 62704
www.isvma.org
(217) 546-8381



PET SEPARATION ANXIETY

Separation anxiety is stressful for many pets and their owners. Leaving for work or to go anywhere without your canine companion can lead to destructive behaviors in the home.

Here's a guide about separation anxiety, how to help prevent it and what to do if you feel your furry friend is afflicted.



WHAT IS

SEPARATION ANXIETY?

Separation anxiety is the uneasy and stressful psychological response an animal feels from either being left alone OR perceiving that they are about to be left alone.

Animals often pick up on work/school routines when they see their owner putting on their shoes, jacket and grabbing keys, they know they will be left alone. Dogs may begin to follow you closely, whine, jump on you, pant and overall seem uneasy. You may also come home to some of your furniture destroyed. Inappropriate elimination (urinating or defecating in the house) can be physical stress-related symptoms and are not thought to be that the dog is "getting back at you" for leaving, although humans tend to perceive it that way.

It is important to realize that coming home to destructive behaviors can also be due to boredom or other stressful stimuli. Determining at what time throughout the day those behaviors are occurring (right after you leave, five hours later, etc.) can help you to determine if your pet is bored or truly has separation anxiety. (Perhaps there is something that is causing stress or for them to act out, such as when the mail is being delivered.)

Installing a camera in your home can also be a useful aid to help determine what is happening and when.

HOW CAN YOU PREVENT THIS FROM HAPPENING?

SPEND TIME APART



Since COVID, many owners are at home with their pets throughout the day as more jobs became remote. Ensure that you and your dog spend time apart during the day so they learn to accept alone time. Physical exercise and mental stimulation both help to reduce a pet's overall anxiety and should be part of a dog's daily routine.

CREATE SAFE SPACE



A safe place, such as a kennel, is great space where a dog can go for nap times and to unwind at night. Give a yummy treat to your pet when they enter this space (such as a frozen enrichment toy) to help keep their mind busy and calm. This space should NEVER be used as a punishment as that can create fear for going into the kennel. Adult pets that have never been crated may have more difficulty with this than puppies. If your dog is not comfortable with a crate, consider other options for their safe space. Talk with your veterinarian about how to introduce a crate to your dog or come up with other options.



WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU THINK YOUR DOG HAS SEPARATION ANXIETY?

While it is easy to think that anti-anxiety medications are the quick solution, there is more to correcting separation anxiety.

Behavioral medications and drugs are most effective when used in conjunction with behavior modification programs. Desensitization (teaching that triggers are not something to be feared) and counter-conditioning (turning a negative response to a situation into a positive response) come in as the most crucial part of helping dogs overcome fear.

Talk with your veterinarian about how to use desensitization and counter-conditioning in your daily routine. Also ask what, if any, anti-anxiety medications may be useful during that process.