

The Fourth of July for many people means gathering together, eating, possibly drinking and fire works! Many like to include their pets in the celebration. Other's choose to stay at home because their pets are afraid of loud noises and the neighbors put on a big display of fireworks. It is kind of a darned if you do and darned if you don't. How you handle your pets on the 4th is up to you to choose the best scenario. The ASPCA posted the following thoughts about making the 4th of July good for everyone.

If your pet has a fear of or an aversion to loud noises:

- Something as simple as turning on some soft music and moving your pet into an interior room with no windows can be helpful. Give them a space where they feel comfortable and calm that's inside and away from all of the excitement.
 - You can also consider giving your pet an enrichment activity, like a Kong or a chew, to keep them busy inside.
- An anxiety vest may work in some cases—if you don't have one, try a snugly fitting t-shirt.
- If you and your veterinarian do decide that anti-anxiety medication is your pet's best bet, there are a few things to remember. First and foremost, give a practice dose of the medication before the big night to see how your pet responds to the medication. Second, never share the medication with another animal or give more than the recommended amount, and always keep a close eye on your pet.
- While noise phobias are not as common in cats, they can and do happen. Fortunately, cats tend to hide when frightened. Checking in on your cats, having some quiet music on and keeping them indoors during the height of the fireworks is always a good idea.

Other safety concerns to consider:

- Never leave alcoholic drinks unattended where pets can reach them. If ingested, the animal could become intoxicated and weak, severely depressed or could go into a coma. Death from respiratory failure is also a possibility in severe cases.
- Do not apply any sunscreen or insect repellent product to your pet that is not labeled specifically for use on animals. Ingestion of sunscreen products can result in drooling, vomiting, diarrhea, excessive thirst and lethargy. The misuse of insect repellent that contains DEET can lead to neurological problems.
- Always keep matches and lighter fluid out of pets' reach. Certain types of matches contain chlorates, which could potentially damage blood cells and result in difficulty breathing—or even kidney disease in severe cases. Lighter fluid can be irritating to skin, and if ingested can produce gastrointestinal irritation and central nervous system depression. If lighter fluid is inhaled, aspiration pneumonia and breathing problems could develop.
- Keep your pets on their normal diet. Any change, even for one meal, can give your pet severe indigestion and diarrhea. This is particularly true for older animals who have more delicate digestive systems and nutritional requirements. And keep in mind that foods such as onions, chocolate, coffee, avocado, grapes, raisins, salt and yeast dough can all be potentially toxic to

companion animals. Do not put glow jewelry on your pets or allow them to play with it. While the luminescent substance contained in these products is not highly toxic, excessive drooling and gastrointestinal irritation could still result from ingestions, and intestinal blockage could occur from swallowing large pieces of the plastic containers.

- Keep citronella candles, insect coils and tiki torch oil products out of reach. Ingestion can produce stomach irritation and possibly even central nervous system depression. If inhaled, the oils could cause aspiration pneumonia in pets.
- Some pets will eat anything, regardless of how it tastes—including fireworks! Never underestimate your pet's level of curiosity and keep them far away from any fireworks. Keep any fireworks securely locked away until you're ready to light them, then be sure to keep pets out of the area as you set off your fireworks.
- Fireworks contain several types of chemicals and heavy metals. If you set off fireworks at home, make sure you thoroughly clean up the area, gathering any trash or remaining materials, before letting your dog have access again.

If you have any reason to suspect your pet has ingested something toxic, please contact your veterinarian or the [**ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center**](#) at (888) 426-4435 immediately.

Dates to Save: July 5 – 2 p.m. – Boulder Lodge – Cardboard Boat Races – food and music
August 4 – NHS Tag Day - Volunteers needed – call Deanna at 715-634-4543.