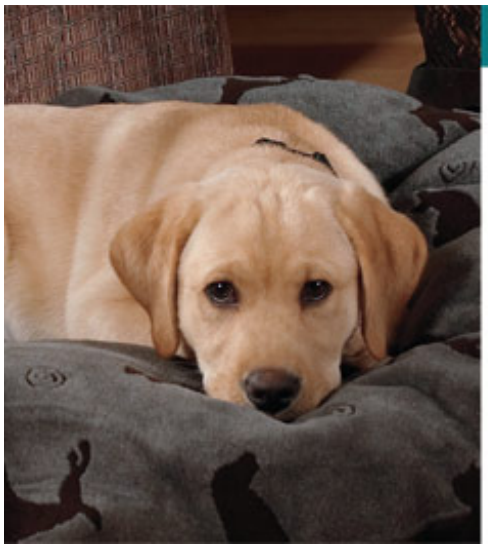
Separation Anxiety Solutions

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff



HEALTHCARE
CALMING

The price of dog anxiety

Does your dog get upset or engage in destructive behaviors when you leave him alone? Separation anxiety is a serious problem which can cause tremendous emotional distress for both dogs and owners. Misinterpreting its signs as simply "bad dog" behavior is one of the most common reasons for pet owners to give up their dogs.

A dog with separation anxiety becomes abnormally anxious when separated from his owner. The severity of the anxiety and the behavior the dog exhibits varies from animal to animal. Separation anxiety can result in problematic behaviors such as: whining, pacing, salivation, barking, howling, scratching, chewing, digging, urinating or defecating, or destroying personal items or household objects.

If you suspect your dog is suffering from severe separation anxiety - especially if he is harming himself or your property - please consult with your veterinarian to find the best method of treatment. For milder cases, you may want to try one or more of the following tips to help reduce your dog's anxiety.

What Can I Do to Help My Anxious Dog?

- **More exercise** - Go for more walks and throw the ball more often. Tired dogs are naturally less anxious.
- **Soften your departures & returns** - Keep your departures and returns low-keyed and unexciting.
- **Gradually lengthen periods of your absence** - Stage several short departures/arrivals throughout the day, gradually lengthening each absence as your dog adjusts.
- **Non-prescription stress reduction formulas** - A number of non-prescription calming products like Ultra-Calm® and Rescue Remedy use natural herbal formulas to help calm your pet for short periods of 1-2 hours.

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- **Pheromone Plug-In** - Many dog owners have seen a remarkable improvement in their dog's anxiety with a relatively new product, the Comfort Zone Plug-In. Inserted in any wall outlet, and odorless to humans, it releases Dog Appeasing Pheromones (D.A.P) in the air throughout the entire room. Mimicking a new mother's natural pheromones, it reduces and prevents stress-related behaviors such as barking, whining, chewing, and soiling. Customers are saying good things about this product:

The Comfort Zone Plug-In has really helped our dog with thunderstorm anxiety. We plugged it in her "safe" room.

Nancy Gagnon, Ann Arbor, MI

Our two beagles used to dig holes in our walls while we were at work. Our veterinarian said the dogs suffer from separation anxiety, and suggested the Comfort Zone Plug-In. Since the day I began using the plug-in the beagles have been doing wonderfully. I love this product!

Stacey Sadowski, Lincoln, NE

Veterinary Options

For a severe case of separation anxiety, your veterinarian might suggest a prescription anti-anxiety medication such as clomipramine, along with behavior modification training exercises. These combined treatments are effective in treating severe separation anxiety. The medication helps your dog relax so he can concentrate on the behavior modification training exercises; the training is what actually changes the dog's response to a stressful situation.

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