

## Keep Pets Safe on the Fourth of July

### **Fireworks and unfamiliar smells can terrify cats and dogs.**

Help ease your cat's anxiety this Independence Day. Once the cracking fireworks get started on the Fourth of July, panic strikes cats and dogs. The booming sounds, bright flashes of light and harsh odor of gunpowder make this national holiday a day for pets to run for cover.

Pet owners are advised to meet with a veterinarian as early as possible. A number of approaches are available to help pets cope with anxiety, including medications.

Dr. Gregory Hammer, American Veterinary Medical Association president, said many dogs experience a great deal of fear on this holiday, adding that it can lead to serious problems. "Nobody really knows why some animals find it so unnerving," he said.

Cats, he said, tend to run and hide when fireworks start. When it comes to dogs, they can exhibit destructive behavior, he said.

Dogs are known to chew through doors and screens, or to just run away. It's important to make sure pets are kept in a part of the house where they don't hurt themselves or something else, he said.

Other tips for pet owners on Independence Day:  
Consult with a veterinarian about anti-anxiety drugs before the holiday.

Turn on the radio or television to dull the sound of fireworks.

Make sure the curtains and blinds are kept closed so pets aren't scared by the flashes and lights.

The best solution might be to be home with your pet when the fireworks start.