

Does Your Dog Have Separation Anxiety?

(NAPS)—It's always a nice feeling to have your dog greet you at the door, but some dogs can be a bit excessive about it. Greeting you this way upon your return home is one common separation anxiety symptom.

Simply put, separation anxiety is the fear of being left alone. If your dog has it, he is not alone. Animal behaviorists estimate that 10 to 15 percent of dogs exhibit symptoms of separation anxiety, which include:

- Digging, chewing or scratching at doors or windows in an attempt to escape or reunite with you;
- Howling, barking and crying in an attempt to get you to return;
- Urination and defecation—even with house-trained dogs—as a result of distress;
- Destroying household objects;
- Clinginess or remaining close to you, even following you from room to room, while you're home.

Punishing a dog for separation anxiety behaviors will not solve the problem. You should understand your dog is not doing it intentionally; he is distressed and anxious because you are not there. This anxiety and nervous energy causes him to act out.

What Causes Separation Anxiety?

No one knows exactly. However, certain factors and triggers are common among separation anxiety cases. They include:

- A change in schedule that requires the pet to be left alone for longer periods of time than normal;
- Living in multiple homes or being abandoned by previous owners makes dogs susceptible to separation anxiety.



About 10 to 15 percent of dogs exhibit symptoms of separation anxiety—fear of being left alone.

Ways To Treat It

Here are some commonly recommended ways to treat separation anxiety:

- Place the dog in a smaller space, such as a crate, where he can feel secure when you leave. However, if the dog panics when crated, do not force him in.
- Leave your dog an article of clothing that smells like you, such as an old T-shirt that you recently slept in.
- Teach your dog as many commands as possible, especially “sit,” “relax” and “stay.” The point of teaching anxious dogs to relax is to give them confidence. Do the exercise in all the rooms of the house and in the yard. Give praise and treats liberally.

Finally, do not make a big production out of your departures.

For additional information from the experts at Novartis Animal Health US, Inc., including tips and treatments regarding intestinal parasites, visit www.growingupwithpets.com.

Did You Know?

About 10 to 15 percent of dogs exhibit symptoms of separation anxiety—fear of being left alone. For symptoms of separation anxiety and advice on how to treat it, visit the Novartis Animal Health US, Inc. Web site at www.growingupwithpets.com.

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