



FIREWORKS SCARE
SMALL ANIMALS

Fireworks are enjoyed year round by people, but can be a source of fear for many animals. It doesn't have to be that way though, so don't ignore the problem. Please speak to us about how we can help. You can also follow our top tips to make firework celebrations less frightening for your pet. Rodents and small animals each have their own way of showing signs of fear.

Behaviours to watch out for include:

RABBITS:

- Stamping their back feet repetitively
- Hiding in a corner head first
- Wide eyes or third eyelid across their eyes
- Rapid breathing
- Kicking and biting when picked up when normally placid
- Fighting (this can happen between bonded rabbit pairs)

GUINEA PIGS:

- Darting around, running at the walls
- Wide eyes
- Stiffened body
- Rapid breathing
- Hiding in a corner head first
- Digging at the floor, trying to cover themselves

FERRETS:

- Releasing their scent glands
- Darting quickly under cover
- Hissing
- Shaking their tail
- Trembling
- Repetitive aggressive bites in the same area when they are picked up

RODENTS:

- Hissing
 - Squealing when picked up
 - High pitched alert squeaks, continuing for several minutes
 - Shaking their tail
 - Stamping their feet for several minutes
 - Coat puffed up
 - Walking on tip toes
 - Hiding in small spaces
 - Launching an attack when a hand enters the accommodation
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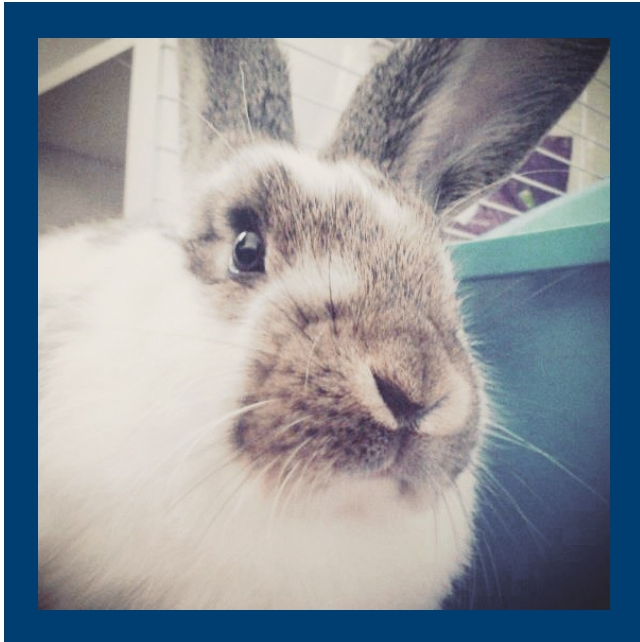
HOW TO A MANAGE A FEARFUL SMALL ANIMAL:

Small animals often find a large and sudden change in environment distressing. We recommend the following to help them cope with stressful situations such as fireworks:

- Add extra hides and bedding to their accommodation.
- Lock away outdoor pets in their night accommodation slightly earlier than normal to allow them to settle before the fireworks start
- Provide them with their favourite healthy treats in ways that stimulate them to forage and focus. This could include hay kebabs, paper rummage bags, stuffed toilet rolls, feed balls and activity treat boards.
- Avoid too much handling
- Companionship – this is the biggest protector against fear for most small animals (although sadly not rodents). A neutered pair of rabbits, or a small group of same sex guinea pigs are far more likely to remain in a relaxed state as their same species companions offer security and comfort.
- Naturally calming products – we have a variety of products which can help calm your pet, please speak to us about which ones may be of most benefit to your pet.

Please pop into the surgery or call us on **01942 677979** if you would like to discuss any issues raised in this leaflet further, or for some further advice.





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