

Protexin®
VETERINARY

Smarter pet care, powered by biotics.

Understanding your pet's behaviour



Our pets have many ways of telling us that they may be feeling stressed, anxious or fearful. However, these signs are not always obvious and may even be misinterpreted as normal behaviour.

If we are not vigilant, we could miss the initial signs that our pets are feeling stressed or anxious, and therefore miss the opportunity to implement strategies to help manage their behaviour before it escalates into a more serious issue.

If you have any concerns about your pet's behaviour, it is important to seek guidance from a qualified professional sooner rather than later.



Signs of anxiety can be more subtle in cats, especially in the earlier stages. Observing videos of your cat in their normal environment can be a useful tool for qualified behaviourists to help assess your cat's emotional state.

Spot the signs that your pet may be feeling anxious

Mild	Moderate	Severe
Lip-licking 	Panting 	Biting 
Yawning 	Shaking/ trembling 	Baring teeth and lip-curling 
Tail lowered 	Inappropriate toileting 	Hair standing up 
Tail tucked between legs 	Increased sleeping 	Inappropriate toileting 
Overgrooming 	Drooling 	Panting* 
Tail flicking 	Pacing/ restlessness 	Growling, snarling, barking, hissing (i.e. may be directed at a person/animal) 
Hiding 	Increased vocalisation 	Lunging forward/ swiping 
Avoiding an object/situation/ areas of the house 	Change in appetite 	Destructive behaviour 
Avoiding eye contact 	Cowering/ crouching 	Vigorous attempts to escape 



*Open mouth breathing in cats can be a symptom of a serious underlying medical condition. If you notice these symptoms please contact your vet immediately.

Your pet is showing signs of anxiety – what should you do next?

Early signs of anxiety are not always easy to spot. It may be that the animal has been struggling for some time before these signs have been noticed, or become problematic. Hence their tricky behaviours are often well-established and there is rarely a quick and easy fix. Many pets will require support from an appropriately

qualified behaviourist; this is essential in any animals which have shown signs of aggression. However, in some cases simple adjustments to daily lifestyle, and considering an individual's specific needs, can make a huge difference. The following tips are helpful to consider whilst awaiting support from a behaviourist.



Whilst awaiting behavioural support:



Keep a diary and record problematic behaviours (what they are, when they occur, how long they last for, if there are any obvious triggers).



Video episodes of difficult behaviour if possible.

Keeping everyone safe is a priority

Should a dog have shown any sign of aggression, no matter how minor (from baring teeth, lip-curling, growling or snarling through to lunging or even biting) then professional behavioural support

should be sought as soon as possible. Safety of people and other animals is a priority; appropriate measures, as listed below, should be taken whilst waiting for behavioural support.



Keep the dog on a lead at all times when out of the house.



Train the dog to have a muzzle put on and use this when out of the house or if around potential triggers.



Avoid stimulatory situations.



Keep children away from the dog. Children and dogs should **never** be left alone together. This is important even if a dog has no history of aggression.

What does your pet need?

We are all aware that our pets need food, water, sleep and exercise. Beyond these, other important requirements such as social interaction and play (with humans and/or other pets) are easily forgotten. These requirements are just as essential for our pets to live happy and fulfilled lives, but often fall by the wayside.

Many necessary behaviours will differ by breed (e.g. hunting, herding, chewing, grooming, digging). For example, a spaniel is likely to require more running and searching activities, whereas a terrier is likely to need more chewing and digging opportunities. Even within breeds, some of these requirements will vary on an individual basis.

We can think of our animals' needs as filling a box – if their requirements are met satisfactorily, and the box is 'full' they are more likely to be content and healthy. However, if they are lacking in certain activities they may 'fill the gap' with inappropriate and undesirable behaviours, such as destructive chewing of furniture, urine spraying, excessive barking etc.



‘Mind the gap’

The below image is an example of an individual dog’s needs, and how shortfalls may lead to inappropriate behaviours.

When we think about our pets in these ways it becomes easier to empathise with their tricky behaviour, rather than considering them naughty or resigning ourselves to their behaviour being an inherent part of their personality. It is clear to see that one animal may have very different needs to another, hence generalised recommendations are not appropriate. Instead if we can take the time to think about the specific needs of our individual pet, dependent on their breed, and how this compares to their current lifestyle

we may be able to identify where their frustrations lie and make simple changes to resolve them. These can have a huge impact on their general demeanour and potentially even reduce the problematic behaviour.

Whilst cats’ specific needs do vary, the same principles apply – if their emotional needs are not being met, they are more likely to develop undesirable or problematic behaviours such as inappropriate toileting or destruction of furniture. Compared to dogs, cats typically have a greater need for time spent grooming and scratching and social contact is generally most beneficial when on their terms.

Content, healthy dog

Eating
Chewing
Playing
Other breed specific requirements (e.g. digging/grooming)
Sleeping/resting
Social interactions with humans
Social interactions with dogs
Hunting/exploring
Exercise/time spent outside the home

Unhappy dog

Eating
Chewing
Playing
Other breed specific requirements (e.g. digging/grooming)
Sleeping/resting
Social interactions with humans
Social interactions with dogs
Hunting/exploring
Exercise/time spent outside the home
Inappropriate behaviours fill the gap

Are we inadvertently rewarding the unwanted behaviour?

An animal will not repeatedly carry out a behaviour unless there is something in it for them. This could be in the form of reward or relief. For example, a dog whose owners have recently had a new baby and is frustrated by its lack of social contact may start barking; even the seemingly negative action of telling the dog off can provide the dog with some attention which it so desperately craves, thereby unintentionally rewarding and reinforcing the behaviour. Similarly an anxious cat, living in a busy household, which hisses when someone approaches, may feel relief at the person moving away, hence

the behaviour is reinforced and repeated in future. In both cases we are unlikely to be able to resolve these unwanted behaviours solely by our actions at the time. Instead if we consider the underlying emotional state of the animal, both at the time of the behaviour and in general, we may be able to make other changes to improve their overall mood, which can often help to reduce problematic behaviours. A professional behaviourist will make a full assessment of your pet's emotional well-being and help to make a plan as to how to best move forwards.



What to look for when selecting a behaviourist?

Whilst very few behavioural issues are caused by a medical condition alone, it is always important for a vet to examine your pet prior to seeking behavioural support to exclude any medical reasons for their problematic behaviour. In some cases the vet may identify an abnormality which may be contributing to their behaviour, such as itchy skin; if left untreated this could have a negative effect on a pet's overall mood.

Your vet may be able to recommend a local behaviourist; however, should this not be feasible we recommend using the guidance below to aid your selection as there are limited regulations when it comes to someone advertising themselves as an animal behaviourist, behavioural therapist or animal behaviour expert.

Guidance on how to find a behaviourist

It is important to select a certified behaviourist who is listed on one of the following registers to ensure they are appropriately trained to provide up-to-date, research-based advice, using positive techniques.



Veterinary surgeons (MRCVS) with specific behavioural training



Association for the Study of Animal Behaviour (ASAB)



COAPE Association of Applied Pet Behaviourists & Trainers (CAPBT)



Certified Clinical Animal Behaviourists (CCAB)



Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors (APBC)



Fellowship of Animal Behaviour (FAB)



Animal Behaviour & Training Council (ABTC)

Where do calming supplements fit in?

We always recommend behavioural modification in order to help manage stress and anxiety. Your vet may also recommend a calming supplement to use alongside.

SereniCare is a calming support for dogs and cats, containing a novel blend of ingredients to help manage stress and anxiety.

Introducing



Suitable for use in situations such as:



Noise sensitivity
(fireworks and thunderstorms)



Stressful situations (vet visits,
moving home, kennels/
cattery, travelling)



Separation anxiety



Social fear (unfamiliar visitors)



General anxiety

87.5%

recommend SereniCare
to their family & friends
HomeTesterClub.com

SereniCare's 4 key ingredients:



Alpha-casozepine (Hydrolysed Milk Protein) – Originally derived

from cow's milk, Alpha-casozepine is a natural bioactive peptide with well-researched calming and relaxing properties.



L-tryptophan – Acting as the sole precursor to serotonin,

the happy hormone, L-tryptophan is a key ingredient to help support normal mood and behaviour.



Calming postbiotic blend*

– A combination of heat treated

Lactobacillus rhamnosus CECT8361 and *Bifidobacterium longum* CECT7347, which act to help manage stress and anxiety-related behaviour.



Fibersol™ – A resistant maltodextrin which acts as a prebiotic to

beneficial bacteria helping to promote a healthy microbiome which is key for normal gut-brain communication.

*This postbiotic blend has been shown to promote behaviour associated with low anxiety in zebrafish, a species often studied to understand anxiety.

Protexin Biotics

Gastrointestinal and brain health are intrinsically linked. Our Protexin Biotics have been expertly developed to support a healthy microbiome. The microbiome is essential for the normal functioning of the gastrointestinal tract, gut-brain axis and for the gut's interaction with the rest of the body. Our Protexin Biotics help support the natural balance in your pet's gut and keeps them at their best.



Prebiotics

Prebiotics selectively feed beneficial bacteria, supporting a diverse and healthy microbiome.



Postbiotics

Postbiotics are inactivated microorganisms which remain bioactive in the gut, providing health benefits.

Instructions for use

Begin supplementation with SereniCare 2 weeks prior to expected anxious event.* Give once daily according to body weight. Can be repeated 90-120 minutes prior to an expected anxious event. SereniCare is suitable for long-term use alongside appropriate behavioural training. Amount may be increased or decreased as directed by your vet.

*Individual animals can vary. Effects may be seen sooner in some animals, though may take up to 6 weeks in others.



Weight	Daily amount
<10kg	½ sachet
10-25kg	1 sachet
25-50kg	2 sachets
>50kg	3 sachets

For more advice on your pet's behaviour please contact a qualified professional.

Scan the QR code for more behaviour tips.



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