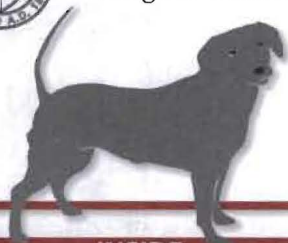




Cornell University
College of Veterinary Medicine



DOG Watch

Expert information on medicine, behavior and health from a world leader in veterinary medicine

Vol. 17, No. 8 ♦ August 2013

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Her Shih Tzu Howls at 5:30 a.m. 8

Reasons could range from anxiety to response to high-pitched sounds.

IN THE NEWS ...

The Effect of Humans' and Dogs' Evolution?

Estimates about the timing of dogs' domestication range widely from 10,000 to 100,000 years ago. Most recently, researchers at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, studying DNA from four gray wolves, three indigenous Chinese dogs, a German Shepherd Dog, Belgian Malinois and Tibetan mastiff, found that dogs may have diverged from gray wolves 32,000 years ago.

Even more fascinating, however, their study indicates that domestic dogs' brains and digestive organs evolved in ways similar to humans'. The possible explanation: A common environment drove both canine and human evolution. Dogs and humans underwent similar changes in genes responsible for digestion, metabolism and processing of the brain chemical serotonin, the researchers say.

"As domestication is often associated with large increases in population density and crowded living conditions, these 'unfavorable' environments might be the selective pressure that drove the rewiring of both species," says their report on the study published in the journal *Nature*. ♦

When a Sudden Disaster Strikes

Will you be ready with an emergency plan, essential supplies and — a critical component — a roomy crate for your dog?

Disaster preparedness isn't only for earthquakes and hurricanes. It's also vital for everyday occurrences, such as an extended power outage or a sudden wildfire racing over the hill. Every 23 seconds, a fire department rushes to a fire in the U.S., according to the National Fire Protection Association. Are you ready?



Dogs rescued after flooding in Minot, N.D., June 2011

FEMA

Planning is the most important element to keep your dog safe in any disaster. "A common myth is assuming that you are going to be back home in a short period of time. Nobody can predict when you may return after a disaster," says Gretchen L. Schoeffler, DVM, a specialist in emergency and critical care at the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine. "It's obviously (continued on page 6)

The Warning Signs of Fear Aggression

Strangers, sudden movement and new experiences can trigger the behavior among unsocialized dogs

Twyla's owner opened the front door and welcomed her sister Mary for a long visit. As Mary carried her large red suitcase up the stairs to the bedrooms, Twyla appeared at the top. Seeing the tall, blonde stranger coming toward her, the little black and tan Cavalier King Charles Spaniel barked and growled ferociously.

Her behavior is not unusual. It's an example of fear aggression, an antagonistic response to strangers, especially those who appear unexpectedly. It's also a reaction to sudden movements and novel experiences. Most dogs will run if they encounter something frightening, a behavior known

as the flight response, but if that doesn't seem to be an option, they may instead behave aggressively — barking, lunging, even biting.

Genetic Basis. Fear aggression is common in dogs who weren't socialized to many different people and experiences at an early age, but it can also have a genetic basis. Owners who don't recognize the signs of fear often mistake the behavior as offensive aggression, says Katherine A. Houpt, VMD, Ph.D., diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists and emeritus professor of animal behavior at the Cornell University (continued on page 4)

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SHORT TAKES

A Change in Diet May Help Detection Dogs

A \$1-million grant from the U.S. Department of Justice enabled researchers to discover a surprising way to improve detection dogs' skills. The dogs, who work in a variety of jobs here and abroad from sniffing out bombs to uncovering contraband, performed better in exercise and detection tests with a simple change in diet — one higher in polyunsaturated fats. The diet appears to help them return to lower body temperatures after exercise, which may result in less panting and greater sniffing.

Researchers from Auburn University worked on the project at the university's Canine Detection Research Institute. A key part of the study was the institute's capability to flush out fumes between tests, ensuring a fresh field for the dogs for each test.

"Previous studies from other facilities, which lack this feature, had suggested detection dogs signaling for suspect substances are about 70 percent accurate," says collaborative researcher Joseph Wakshlag, DVM, Ph.D., section chief of clinical nutrition at Cornell. "The lower numbers may have been due to study design flaws that the methods employed by Auburn's studies overcame. Dogs tested in the new facility and in specially designed field tests signaled with 90 percent and above accuracy. We also found we can push detection performance even further with the right kind of food."

During their study over 18 months, researchers rotated 17 trained dogs through three diets — a high-end performance diet, adult dog food and adult dog food diluted with corn oil. Dogs who ate the food with corn oil returned to normal body temperatures most quickly after exercise and were better able to detect smokeless powder, ammonia nitrate and TNT when tested.



Bomb detection dogs, wearing goggles to protect their eyes from desert sand, worked with the military in Iraq.

"Corn oil has lots of polyunsaturated fats, similar to what you'd find in a lot of nuts and common grocery store seed oils," Dr. Wakshlag says. "Past data from elsewhere suggest that these polyunsaturated fats might influence the sense of smell, and it looks like that may be true for detection dogs. It could be that fat somehow improves nose signaling structures or reduces body temperature or both. But lowering protein could also play a part in improving olfaction."

Top 10 Conditions

Veterinary Pet Insurance examined its database of nearly a half million policies and found treatment for skin allergies topped the list of the 10 most common conditions in 2012. The average cost of care for skin allergy treatment was \$96, while a veterinary visit for arthritis — the most expensive on the list — averaged \$258.

The top conditions in descending order: skin allergies, ear infections, skin infections, non-cancerous skin growths, upset stomach/vomiting, arthritis, intestinal upset/diarrhea, bladder infection, periodontitis/dental disease, bruise or contusion. ♦

Quick Action at Home Can Stop the Spread of Hot Spots

Untreated, they can become infected and result in scarring

Within a matter of hours, you notice your dog has developed a red, damp, raw, hairless spot, and it's spreading. It looks like a skin abrasion you might get falling off your bike. The likely diagnosis: a hot spot.

Dog with allergies or other underlying skin diseases are more susceptible to creating hot-spot-type lesions, says dermatologist William H. Miller, VMD, Medical Director of the Companion Animal Hospital at the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine. Because they feel itchy, allergic dogs may lick, rub, scratch and bite a particular spot until it's bare. The patch quickly can grow in size. What to do?

"The lesion usually is uncomfortable," Dr. Miller says, "so not treating it causes needless discomfort. If the lesion isn't treated, it can become infected and deep infections of the skin can cause scarring."

Here's how to treat a hot spot found within the first six hours of its appearance, Dr. Miller says:

- ◆ Clip the hair in the region so a sticky mat doesn't form.
- ◆ Wash the sensitive bare area with a mild soap and water or a cleansing solution such as chlorhexidine or dab it well with cotton soaked in antiseptic solution.
- ◆ If advised by your veterinarian, treat the spot with a thin layer of topical steroid cream. It isn't always necessary, Dr. Miller says, because some dogs leave the area alone once it's clipped and cleaned.

Some pets are so tender in the bare area that oral steroids or pain medications are prescribed, Dr. Miller says. If your dog is diabetic, immune deficient or has a metabolic disorder, the veterinarian may dispense an antibiotic but it isn't necessary in most cases.

Anything that can cause an acute, intense itchiness or pain can trigger a hot spot. Common causes in dogs include matted fur, bites from ticks or other insects, stinging nettles and impacted anal sacs, Dr. Miller says. Breeds with long coats seem especially susceptible.

Hot spots are the same thickness as the surrounding skin (not mounded), and the surrounding skin looks normal. The bare spot is damp because serum is leaking from the broken skin. It's not pus, and it doesn't smell because it's not infected. But it will become infected and smell if not treated quickly.

Thick Bald Spots. True hot spots differ from bald spots called acute moist furunculosis and furunculosis, which are thicker than the surrounding skin, Dr. Miller says. Small raised skin bumps or even pus-filled bumps are seen surrounding these bald patches when the area is clipped. "Many cases of 'hot spots' in long-coated dogs are actually this," Dr. Miller says, adding that owners might not notice the pet's pre-existing bacterial disease because the long coat hides it. "Bacterial infections are itchy in animals and it's not uncommon for an animal with an infection to suddenly attack one infected area because the itchiness there became intolerable."

If fleas or ticks set off hot spots in your dog, try a different type of flea and tick control, such as a monthly preventive sold at veterinary clinics. If poor grooming is an issue, step up grooming. For short-haired dogs, a weekly brushing may be enough to keep coats in good order by removing dirt and spreading natural oils throughout the coat and keeping skin irritant-free, but longer-haired pets such as German Shepherd Dogs and Border Collies need more frequent brushings, advise the American Animal Hospital Association's website (HealthyPet.com) and ASPCA.org.



Dogs suffering a hot spot experience such intense itching they may rub, scratch and bite the spot until it's bare.

If your dog doesn't like brushings, ease him into it. Give him a treat after each short brush stroke. Gradually over several sessions, lengthen the brush strokes and brushing time.

The bottom line: "A hot spot has a cause," Dr. Miller says, "and if that cause is identified, it should be corrected." ♦

TRUE OR FALSE? HOT SPOTS CAUSE HAIR LOSS

Folklore abounds with tales about hot spots that often have little basis in truth. A sampling:

Myth: Provide plenty of fresh drinking water for your dog so that dehydration doesn't cause stress-related hot spots.

Reality: "Fresh water is always needed but not to prevent a hot spot," says dermatologist William H. Miller, VMD, at Cornell.

Myth: Zinc supplements can help prevent hot spots.

Reality: Not true, Dr. Miller says.

Myth: Hot spots cause rapid hair loss.

Reality: "The hair isn't lost. It's pulled out or scratched off," Dr. Miller says.

Myth: Oral antibiotics are usually prescribed for hot spots.

Reality: "Not true if it's a true hot spot," Dr. Miller says.

FEAR... *(continued from the cover)*

College of Veterinary Medicine. Early signs of anxiety can include:

- ◆ Licking the lips.
- ◆ Showing the whites of the eyes.
- ◆ Holding the ears and tail in a downward position instead of up as they would be in a dog being offensively aggressive.
- ◆ Wagging the tail appealingly downward, but if it is held clamped to the body, the dog is even more fearful.



Licking the lips, along with showing the whites of the eyes, is a sign of fear aggression not to be taken lightly.

BIGSTOCK

Those may be the only warning that some dogs give before becoming aggressive. When you see such body

language or an attempt to escape the person or situation, do not punish the dog. That merely confirms the

dog's belief that the person is indeed to be feared. Instead, immediately remove the dog before his behavior escalates.

Any person who frightens a dog can elicit an aggressive response, from tall women carrying suitcases to bearded men, men wearing hats and people in uniform. Visiting a place the dog associates with a painful experience, such as a veterinary clinic or grooming shop, may also invite a display of fear aggression. The behavior is particularly likely to occur if the dog feels trapped or cornered.

Aggression in response to fear usually begins when the dog starts to mature, from 6 months to 2 years of age. It can be seen in males and

BEGIN DESENSITIZATION WITH NON-THREATENING STRANGERS AND LOTS OF VERY SPECIAL TREATS

To desensitize your dog to willingly accept the presence of strangers, start by giving treats while he's with someone non-threatening, such as a child or a small woman. Work up to larger women, then small, clean-shaven men, larger men and finally large men with beards.

To help him begin to associate a fearsome person with a positive experience, be sure to give lots of treats — special ones such as small cubes of cheese, low-fat hot dogs or steak — and give them only in the presence of the feared person or experience.

"You should be able to do that just by walking down the street," says animal behaviorist Katherine A. Houpt, VMD, Ph.D., at Cornell. "You're going to see a variety of people. If you see somebody who's really scary, however, just turn and go the other direction."

If your dog is too frightened to take treats, it's because the person is too close. The next time, start giving treats at a greater distance from the person, even if you have to cross the street. He will gradually become more comfortable with the approach of people. Work with him slowly and go back to a previous distance if he starts to show fear again. Always be sure the dog has an escape route or is otherwise protected from the stranger's approach so he doesn't feel the need to bite or show other aggressive behaviors.

As your dog becomes more relaxed when a stranger approaches, you can let the stranger get closer. Enlist his help — perhaps a friend or family member your dog hasn't previously met — in training. Ask the stranger to toss a treat to the dog from the distance where the dog is comfortable without looking at or speaking to him.

Then the stranger should walk away. Let the dog become comfortable with the person at his own pace and make sure the person doesn't reach for him, speak to him or make eye contact until the dog shows interest. Then the person can gradually hold a hand with a treat below the dog's head for him to take it and eventually offer brief eye contact or speech.

You may have to desensitize your dog to this same person in different positions. Some dogs are fine when the person is sitting but become anxious when the person stands, carries a suitcase or swings a shopping bag. Use the same technique described above to accustom the dog to the person in different postures.

COUNTER CONDITIONING

Another technique to try is the "Watch me" command. When you see a stranger approaching, teach your dog to look at you when you say "Watch me." This removes his focus from the approaching person.

females of any breed or mix, though Dr. Houpt says it can be especially common in German Shepherd Dogs.

Puppy Kindergarten. Early and frequent socialization in the form of a puppy kindergarten class is the best prevention for fear aggression. It's essential for puppies to encounter a variety of people and situations during the formative socialization period, which lasts until 16 weeks of age. This helps them learn to accept the approach of nonthreatening strangers.

Dr. Houpt recommends puppy classes that are held at veterinary clinics. "At that age, a puppy has a positive attitude toward the veterinary clinic because he remembers this is where he got to play with other dogs and got lots of treats and toys," she says.

If you have a fearful dog who wasn't socialized or you don't know his socialization history, don't flood him with new experiences to try to make up for his lack of socialization. That will send his level of fear into overdrive. He needs gradual and patient desensitization and counter conditioning to overcome his fears. Both training methods use gradual exposure to a negative stimulus — along with petting and treating — to change the dog's association to a positive one.

Desensitization involves exposure to a stimulus at such low intensity that the dog does not respond. Gradually the strength of the stimulus is increased. The woman with the red suit-



Males and females of any breed or mix can become fear aggressive, though German Shepherd Dogs are especially prone to it. The behavior usually begins from 6 months to 2 years of age.

case is a block away, then half a block away, etc. Counter conditioning is teaching the dog a behavior incompatible with aggression, such as grabbing a toy or lying down or simply sitting watching the owner. (Please see sidebar on the facing page.)

Identify Triggers. Observe your dog closely to learn exactly what type of person or situation frightens him. They commonly include men, children, fast-moving objects such as skateboards or bicycles, and people leaning over or hugging him.

Determine how close a person can get before your dog shows signs of fear and identify his signs of discomfort. This information will help you as you begin to modify his behavior. It's also a wise idea to enlist the services of a veterinary behaviorist or certified applied animal behaviorist to help you identify the dog's triggers and map out a solution.

Food-motivated dogs respond especially well to desensitization using treats as rewards. If a dog is conditioned to feel that a big, bearded guy is scary, he's going to act fearfully aggressive, Dr. Houpt says, "but you want him to think, 'Oh, a big, bearded guy means pieces of hot dog. I love this guy.'"

If a stranger is someone who will be visiting your home regularly, it can help to have that person feed your dog his meals. Once Mary had given Twyla her food dish a few times, the dog accepted her as a member of the family.

Be patient and kind in training, and always end each session while your dog is comfortable. You should eventually be rewarded with a dog who is less fearful or even happy at a stranger's approach. ♦

A GROOMER'S MUZZLE CAN PREVENT BITES IN TRAINING

If your dog has a history as a biter, or if you're concerned that he might bite, teach him to love wearing an open-ended groomer's muzzle. This type of muzzle will ensure that he can't bite but still allows you to give treats. To do this, put the muzzle on him, give several pieces of a fabulous treat — one that he never gets at any other time — then remove the muzzle. Repeat this many times over a period of a week until your dog thinks that wearing the muzzle is the best thing ever. Then you no longer have to worry that he will bite you or others as you desensitize and counter condition him.



DISASTER ... (continued from the cover)

a concern if you leave a pet in a house or in a yard that they will run out of food and water.

Stranded Animals. “Having to leave pets behind evokes images of stranded animals struggling in the floodwaters of Hurricane Katrina. Early implementation of a well-thought-out plan might very well mean the difference between life and death for all members of your family, including the furry ones,” Dr. Schoeffler says.

Experts stress that you should:

- ◆ **Have a plan of action.** How you will contact family members if you're at work and they're shopping at the time of a disaster? (Text messages often work when phone calls don't.) What will you do in different situations, such as a tornado or flood? What's best for you is typically what's best for your pet.
- ◆ **Keep your dog current on vaccinations** and rabies shots to ensure he's healthy and can be accepted at a kennel or emergency shelter if necessary.
- ◆ **Microchip your dog and register him with the microchip company.** Be sure to update your information, including your cell phone, when you move. When animals without ID wind up in shelters, odds are poor that they'll reunite with their owners. But a study found reunifications soared to 74 percent for microchipped dogs.
- ◆ **Have a collar for your dog** securely fastened with an **ID tag** and your phone numbers.
- ◆ **Designate a willing neighbor or friend to serve as stand-in to evacuate your dog if you're at work when disaster strikes.** Give him a house key and show him where you keep evacuation supplies.

Dick Green, chief of ASPCA disaster preparedness, has led animal rescues, including recovery efforts, during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita with the American Humane Association. The most obvious



DAVE SAVILLE/FEMA NEWS

A search team rescues dogs who had been stranded in the floodwaters of Princeville, N.C., in September 1999.

mistakes he's seen: Some owners don't take steps to have the necessary carrier, pet food, water and veterinary vaccination papers, so when they arrive at a safe destination, “They may only have a pet on a leash.”

Others have arrived at emergency shelters and had to sleep outside with their dog because they didn't identify pet-friendly lodging in advance and the shelters were full, he says. (See GoPet-Friendly.com, among other sites.) They also didn't call their local emergency management office, animal shelter or animal control office for advice on

whether a last-resort, pet-friendly shelter would be available — pre-registration may be required.

Living in Cars. Some evacuees of the 2009 Mississippi River flood in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, had lived in their cars with their pets before a temporary animal emergency shelter opened at Kirkwood Community College and took in more than 1,000 animals. “There are so many common mistakes that are made at that [pre-planning] level,” Green says. When owners try to wing it at the last minute,

DISASTERS BY THE NUMBERS

- ◆ An average of **1,253 tornadoes** touch down in the U.S. annually, according to the federal National Climatic Data Center.
- ◆ Nearly **4,000 earthquakes** — most small — struck somewhere in the U.S. last year, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.
- ◆ Damage caused by **floods** annually tallies in the **billions of dollars**, the National Weather Service says.
- ◆ In an average three-year period, about **five hurricanes** strike the U.S. coastline, killing 50 to 100 people from Texas to Maine, according to the weather service.
- ◆ Nearly **67,800 wildfires** averaging 138 acres in size burned last year in the U.S.
- ◆ **Every 30 minutes**, someone is injured in a fire, according to the National Fire Protection Association. **Every two hours and 55 minutes**, someone dies as a result of a fire.

"They don't have time to plan properly."

A better bet: Start now by identifying pet-friendly motels outside your immediate area or lining up relatives who could take you in if you need to evacuate with your pets. Getting to know your neighbors and their pets can also be an advantage in an emergency, Green says. He suggests a block party as a beginning. "We really try to encourage folks to get to know their community. A lot of times, they don't know their neighbors' pets." If for example, a fire erupted while a neighbor is at work, you'd know to tell a firefighter that two cats and a dog are inside.

Training your dog to regard a crate as a safe haven will reduce his stress if he must be caged or crated during an evacu-

ation or emergency treatment at a veterinary clinic. (Some owners have found success with "free-access" training in which you introduce the crate by leaving the door open with treats and toys inside.) "I always say that nobody's pet should be unhappy in a cage," says Dr. Schoeffler, who is Chief of Emergency and Critical Care Services at the Cornell Hospital for Animals. "They may need to live in a crate for a period of time or a cage. By not learning to like them, it makes them miserable beyond what they need to be."

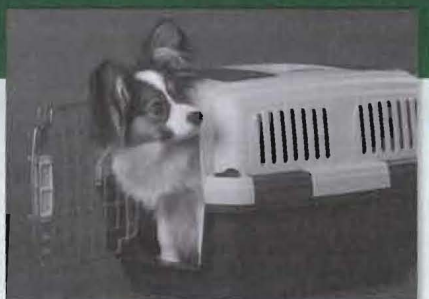
Advanced Risk. Disasters that occur without advance warning put pets at advanced risk, Green says. Wildland fire, earthquakes and tornadoes are the top

three in his view. House fires are an easily forgotten peril, though Dr. Schoeffler sees firefighters, passers-by, neighbors and other family members take pet victims of fires to the Cornell hospital several times a year. "Unfortunately, typically, people living in that house are either injured themselves and have been transported [for treatment]," says Dr. Schoeffler. "As a result, we're not dealing with immediate family. We're dealing with people who are trying to help the family that suffered the loss."

All of which reinforce the advice that it's wise to enlist a neighbor to rescue your pets when you're not home and always keep a disaster kit ready to grab on the run. ♦

ESSENTIALS OF YOUR DOG'S EVACUATION KIT

- ◆ A sturdy crate or pet carrier big enough so your dog could be comfortable for hours; label it with your contact information.
- ◆ A five-day to two-week supply of water, food and medications (including dosage and feeding instructions), veterinary office phone number in case a neighbor does the evacuation or you have to board your pet, and emergency veterinary hospital phone number.
- ◆ Bags for pet waste
- ◆ Toy, treats, pet bed or familiar objects to comfort your dog
- ◆ Food and water bowls
- ◆ Liquid dish soap and disinfectant
- ◆ First-aid kit, pet first-aid book
- ◆ Can opener for canned food
- ◆ Flashlight
- ◆ A battery-powered radio or TV to listen for latest advisories
- ◆ A photo of your dog and another of you together to help prove ownership in case you become separated. Consider creating a waterproof "Lost Dog" sign with your dog's photo to post if he does become lost.
- ◆ Photocopies of key veterinary records to show proof of current vaccinations
- ◆ Two forms in case a neighbor evacuates your pet: 1) A pre-signed letter that releases your designated friend from responsibility if your dog becomes injured in an evacuation, as advised by the American Veterinary Medical Association's "Saving the Whole Family" brochure. 2) A pre-signed veterinary medical treatment authorization so a veterinarian can treat your injured dog in your absence, also advised by AVMA.



HELPFUL RESOURCES

- ◆ "Saving the Whole Family" is a 16-page downloadable brochure at AVMA.org.
- ◆ Ready.gov, a resource-filled website of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, outlines what to do for pets in its "Caring for Animals" section.
- ◆ The websites humanesociety.org and MSPCA.org (MSPCA Angell) have step-by-step advice on creating a pet disaster plan.
- ◆ At ASPCA.org, you can get disaster advice and order a free Pet Safety Pack for a pet-rescue sticker to place on a window at the entrance to your home to alert rescuers to pets inside.



A free window decal from the ASPCA can alert rescue personnel that pets are inside. For more information, use the keywords "pet safety pack" at www.aspc.org.



Katherine A. Houpt, VMD, Ph.D., diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists and emeritus professor at the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, provided the answer on this page.

Please Share Your Questions

We welcome questions of general interest on health, medicine and behavior. We regret however, that we cannot comment on specific products and prior diagnoses. Please send correspondence to:

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How to Stop a Shih Tzu From Howling at 5:30 a.m.?

Q I have recently adopted a rescued Shih Tzu, a 3-year-old male named Skiddles. He has a wonderful temperament and is great in every way, but he howls! He howls even when I take a shower. I sing to him to let him know where I am in the house.

His howls are not consistent and frequently occur at 5:30 a.m. to 6 a.m. My neighbors don't need to think I'm hurting this little dog. I would appreciate any suggestions you may have in this matter.

A There are several reasons Skiddles may be howling and several strategies you can use to help him stop this behavior. The first step in managing this problem is to determine why he howls. Once we understand that, we can develop a specific management plan.

Given that I have very little information about Skiddles's environment, personality, daily routine, relationship to you, etc., it is difficult to narrow down the reasons he is howling. I have included a list of the most likely ones and some general strategies for dealing with this problem.

Among the reasons that dogs howl:

- ◆ Separation anxiety
- ◆ Attention- or companion-seeking
- ◆ Response to certain noises, perhaps ones you can not hear. It could be a high-pitched ultrasound that is above your hearing range but not his.

Strategies for general management of the behavior:

- ◆ **Determine all stimuli that lead to howling.** Exposure to these stimuli can then be avoided or the dog's response to the stimuli altered. I suspect that Skiddles may be suffering from separation anxiety because he howls when you are out of sight. Many rehomed dogs have separation anxiety. The first thing you should do is to teach him to sit and stay. When he can sit for a whole minute while you are in the room, begin to leave

him by going to another room for gradually increasing times.

Be sure that you reward the sit-stays with delicious tiny treats. If he howls, he gets no treats. You could try a pheromone collar such as Adaptil. If his howling occurs in response to separation from you, you should consult your veterinarian because there are FDA-approved medications for that problem.

- ◆ **Alter your response to the howling.** Avoid responses that reinforce the vocalization, such as excess verbal reactions. Depending on your voice, your singing, for instance, may be a big reward for him. (If I sang, he would be punished!) He has learned that his howling leads to your attention so that when he is really alone, he may howl and howl because previously that has resulted in your presence. Try not responding to any of his howls for a week (warn your neighbors). He should stop howling eventually because it no longer brings your attention. It will not seem to be attention seeking or separation anxiety if he howls whether or not you are there. Train him for the "quiet" command. Whenever the dog vocalizes, say "quiet." Call the dog to you, ask him to "sit," and praise a quiet response.
- ◆ **A head halter can be used to reorient the head away from the stimulus.** Focus Skiddles on you and prompt him to sit with his mouth closed. As soon as the dog is relaxed, the leash is relaxed.
- ◆ **If all else fails and the neighbors are threatening legal action, bark-control devices can be used.** Some, but not all, bark collars respond to howling as well as barking. The citronella spray collars are best. The ultrasonic collars usually don't work very long because the dog habituates to the sound. I would hate to use a shock collar on him, and you don't want to use these if he howls because he is anxious.

I hope these general guidelines help. Again, I must emphasize the importance of recognizing the stimuli that cause Skiddles to howl in order to begin treating the problem. ♦

COMING UP ...

BREAST CANCER RESEARCH



BITING



ANAL GLAND PROBLEMS



NUTRITION FOR SENIORS



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