

Separation-Related Anxiety, The **CALM**®
Programme and **Reconcile**®:

A guide for **caregivers**

DOG'S NAME:



Reconcile®
CHAOS TO CALM

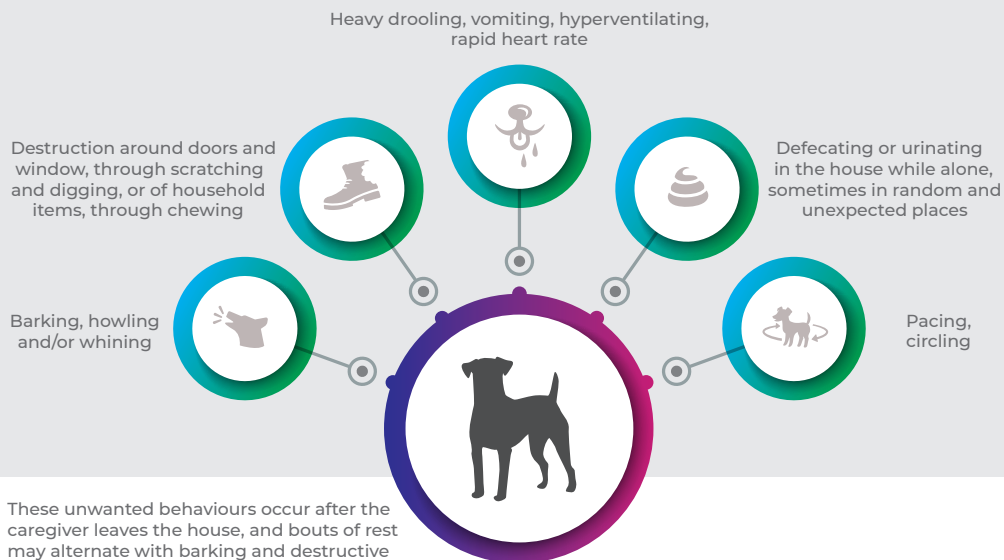
What is separation-related anxiety?

Separation-related anxiety is a condition in which affected dogs may exhibit certain problematic behaviours when left alone, such as when the caregiver leaves the home for work or to run an errand. Research has shown that separation-related anxiety affects up to 17% of dogs^{1,2}. Dogs may have an inherited predisposition to be anxious, or it can be acquired, depending on the dog's history and experiences. The dog's anxiety when left alone can develop

when the dog is unable to soothe their anxiety without the assistance of their caregiver, or when being alone is associated with uncertainty or with fear-inducing signals such as noise. Some of the behavioural responses to this anxiety can be distressing for you when you get home, but it is important to remember that your dog is not being naughty. They are suffering from a treatable medical condition.

What are the signs of separation-related anxiety in dogs?

The more common behaviours associated with separation-related anxiety include⁴:



What causes separation-related anxiety?³⁻⁷

No one has a definitive answer about the cause of separation-related anxiety, which can develop at any age in either sex⁶ and has been diagnosed in all breeds. Your dog is not naughty or spiteful but is suffering from a readily treatable condition.



Inherited predisposition



Situational anxiety and fear
e.g., noise/storm sensitivity



Limited early experiences



Changes in the caregiver's work
schedule or daily routine



Moving to a
different residence



New caregiver
or family



Alteration of the family structure
through birth or death



Ageing and decline
of cognition



Generalised
anxiety



Physical health problems
e.g., chronic pain



Can separation-related anxiety be **managed**?

Yes, there are steps that you can take to help your dog become more independent and then be able to feel safe and secure when alone. Your vet will examine your dog to make sure that any underlying physical health problems are treated and investigate to identify the emotions leading to the unwanted behaviour. If separation-related anxiety is diagnosed your vet will develop a comprehensive treatment plan that may involve medication, behaviour modification and caregiver commitment. Reconcile[®] chewable tablets, when administered in conjunction with a behaviour modification plan that you undertake at home, has been shown to reduce these problematic behaviours.

Reconcile®

Your vet has prescribed Reconcile® to help manage your dog's separation-related anxiety. Reconcile® is a prescription medication for the treatment of separation-related disorders in dogs in conjunction with behaviour modification. Reconcile® is a once-a-day flavoured, chewable tablet. Reconcile® establishes a calmer frame of mind in dogs, making them more receptive to behavioural modification.

How does this medication work?

Reconcile® chewable tablets work by making your dog more receptive to the behavioural modification. Reconcile® is a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor or SSRI. Chemical messengers known as *neurotransmitters* communicate information between nerve cells, known as *neurons*. These neurotransmitters are released into the space between two cells, called a *synapse*, and are then reabsorbed back into the neuron that released them. One such neurotransmitter, called *serotonin*, is responsible for many functions within

the brain, including the control of anxiety. Low levels of serotonin in a dog's brain may result in impaired communication between nerves, producing an increased level of anxiety.⁶ Reconcile® can help correct this chemical imbalance by blocking the reuptake of serotonin and temporarily increase its level in the brain. Veterinary experts believe that higher levels of serotonin improve communication and strengthen circuits in the brain that act to decrease anxiety.

How do I give Reconcile® chewable tablets to my dog?

Reconcile® is a chewable flavoured tablet that is readily consumed by most dogs. If your dog does not readily accept the Reconcile® chewable tablet, it may be offered in food or administered like other tablet medications. Follow your vet's directions regarding how much medication to administer. Reconcile® is given once a day and can be given with or without food.

If a dose is missed, the next scheduled dose should be given as prescribed. Do not increase or double the dose, unless your vet has advised to do so. If more than the prescribed amount of Reconcile® chewable tablets are given, contact your vet, who is the healthcare expert for your dog.

Can I just use the behaviour modification plan without Reconcile®?

Some cases of separation-related anxiety can be improved using the behaviour modification plan alone. However, in some cases the anxiety disorder is so significant that medication is necessary. The combined use of behaviour modification with Reconcile® chewable tablets has also been proven to work faster than behaviour modification alone for the management of separation-related anxiety. Results of clinical trials have shown that after 8 weeks 73% of dogs receiving Reconcile® and behaviour modification had significant behavioural improvement, compared with only 51% of dogs receiving behaviour modification alone.⁷ Reconcile® has been shown to accelerate your dog's response to behaviour modification, thereby reducing detrimental behaviours.

How long should I expect it to take before the behaviour improves? Will the behaviours completely go away?

Some dogs may show improvement within 1 to 2 weeks of starting treatment with Reconcile® chewable tablets.⁸ Your vet will monitor the response to Reconcile® chewable tablets and the behaviour modification plan. If no improvement is noted within 4 weeks (and behavioural modification is being consistently and appropriately undertaken) your vet should re-evaluate case management for your dog. Some dogs may take as long as 8 weeks to show improvement.

Do I have to give Reconcile® chewable tablets forever?

This is a long-term medication as it takes time for it to take effect and your dog will then need time to respond to the behaviour modification plan while the medication is supporting them. You are therefore going to be administering medication for a few months and sometimes longer. Each dog has a unique response to treatment. Your vet will monitor your dog's progress and work with you to determine the appropriate length of treatment for your dog.



What side effects might occur while my dog is taking Reconcile® chewable tablets?

As with all medications, side effects may occur. Your vet can best describe these for you and discuss what to do if you observe any unexpected effects or unusual behaviour in your dog. Some animals may appear more calm or lethargic, but it is important to remember that reducing anxiety can improve quality of sleep and your dog may be able to rest for longer and be more relaxed. If you are concerned speak to your vet so they can determine if it is a positive change in sleep or something

to be concerned about. One of the other more commonly recognised side effects is decreased appetite and if you have concerns about this speak to your vet as a slight temporary adjustment of the dose regime will usually resolve this. Additional side effects that may be observed include urinary tract disorders, incoordination, disorientation, weight loss, eye pupil dilation, vomiting or panting. The most serious side effect is seizures (convulsions), which is rare.

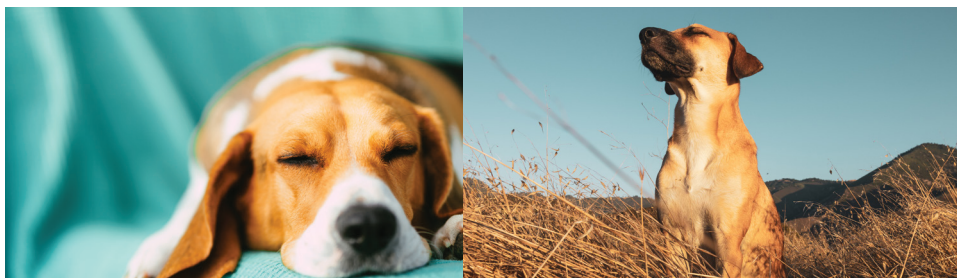
The CALM[®] Programme

The CALM[®] programme has been created by RCVS and EBVS[®] European Veterinary Specialist in Behavioural Medicine, Dr Sarah Heath BVSc PgCertVE Dip. ECAWBM(BM) CCAB FHEA FRCVS.



What is the CALM[®] behaviour modification programme? **Why does my dog need this?**

Your vet will instruct you on how to incorporate behavioural modification techniques to help your dog. The CALM[®] behaviour modification plan consists of four steps that can help your dog build confidence and gain a sense of security when alone. Behaviour modification is an essential component in the treatment of separation-related anxiety in dogs.



Can't I just give my dog the **chewable tablets**?

While Reconcile[®] has been shown to accelerate your dog's response to behaviour modification, behaviour modification is an essential component in the treatment of separation-related anxiety in dogs. In fact, the European Medicines Agency has approved the use of Reconcile[®] for the treatment of separation-related disorders in dogs in conjunction with a behaviour modification plan. Use of Reconcile[®] chewable tablets without concurrent behaviour modification may not provide any lasting benefit of therapy. Instead, long-term success is most likely to be seen when these two components – Reconcile[®] chewable tablets plus the CALM[®] programme – are used together as prescribed by your vet.⁸

Check out Sarah's practical video guides about the CALM[®] programme at www.reconcilefordogs.com/videos —————>



C

CREATE EMOTIONAL STABILITY

- Consider your dog's behaviour when they are not alone - being able to control their emotions helps them to cope with periods of solitude.
- Anxiety is linked to low self-confidence. Work to increase your dog's ability to make decisions for themselves and to cope with novelty and change as this helps to reduce their risk of anxiety.
- Reward your dog for making good decisions and set them up to be successful. You can do this through encouraging your dog to play with toys on their own and through rewarding calm and settled behaviour.
- Remember to avoid interactions with your dog which they can perceive as being confrontational – avoid loud stern voices and do not punish behaviour that has happened in your absence.

A

ALTER EXPECTATIONS OF INTERACTION

- We love to share our dog's company and there is a temptation to spend every minute with them when we are at home. This can lead to unrealistic expectations of our company and make your dog reliant on you to make them feel safe.
- When puppies are very young it is important for them to spend some time alone with appropriate toys to keep them happy and occupied.
- When dogs are uncertain, they look for information and often try to obtain it from you through behaviours such as leaning, pawing, nudging, sniffing, and licking. If they become dependent on this information, they are more likely to be anxious when you are not available.
- Never reject or ignore these requests for information but respond in a calm and passive manner so that you help your dog to overcome their uncertainty.
- Anxious dogs will also offer information through rolling on their back or dribbling urine.
- Do not encourage information seeking or offering behaviours but reward your dog when they start to become more confident, such as when they stop licking your hand or they get up after rolling on their back.

L

LEAVE PREDICTIVE SIGNALS WHICH GIVE CERTAINTY OF YOUR RETURN

- Predictability and control help to reduce anxiety so it is important to enable your dog to predict your departure and return.
 - Provide a visual signal that you are not available and remove this signal when you return.
 - Introduce this signal to your dog slowly and carefully using short periods of planned departure in a safe, comfortable, and relaxing location. When you return remember to remove the signal before interacting with your dog.
 - If your dog is already distressed when you leave, it is helpful to minimise the times when this is necessary if possible.
 - If you must leave them, select a different location from the training safe place and leave a different visual signal.
- (See next section about predictive signals for more information about this step).

M

MODIFY UNDERLYING EMOTIONAL HEALTH WHERE NECESSARY

- Your vet has prescribed Reconcile® chewable tablets to make your dog more receptive to the behavioural modification.
- Reconcile® alters your dog's neurochemistry and increases availability of serotonin to help to reduce anxiety

The use of predictive signals:

During the “L” part of the programme which stands for “Leave predictive signals which give certainty of return” a multi-step process is followed.



Check out
the practical video guide at
reconcilefordogs.com/videos

Part 1

Acclimatising your dog to recognise a visual signal that you are leaving:

- Pick a location to leave your dog where they will be comfortable and limits any injuries that they may do to themselves in your absence (e.g. if they were to chew cables).
- An obvious visual signal, e.g. **a piece of white card on the door**, is pinned up immediately prior to departure and removed immediately on return
- This tells the dog that you are going out.
- If the dog is struggling with separations, try to keep these departures to a minimum while undertaking this behavioural modification plan, as the anxiety felt during these episodes will build.



Top tip:

Make sure that you set your dog up for success so leave them with suitable dog safe toys to keep them occupied, a comfortable place to rest and make sure that the signal itself could not hurt your dog (for example if they ate it). It is also very important to set the signal at an appropriate height to ensure it can be easily seen by the dog.

Part 2

Acclimatising your dog to be relaxed while you are not engaging with them and progressing this to short departures.

This is called the 'Invisible Dog' process, as you will use a visual signal to let your dog know they are 'invisible' to you. Your dog will associate the signal object with being settled while receiving no attention from you but will be reassured by your physical presence. This signal object will then be used to ensure your dog knows you will return during actual departures.

Firstly choose a location for this training that is different to the location used for real departures in part 1. You will also need to choose a visible object as a signal (different to what is used in part 1), something striking like a large ornament is best.

Secondly undertake the following steps:

- Engage with your dog in a low-key way, talking to them and stroking
- Place the signal object in your dog's direct view on a table or chair - your dog is now 'invisible'
- Stop engaging with your dog and undertake another activity e.g. read a book.
- After a short time, remove the signal object and re-engage with your dog.
- Ensure that the period of time chosen is one that your dog will tolerate without seeking attention from you, and gradually build this up to longer and longer periods
- If possible do this several times per day for increasing lengths of time, from a few seconds to several minutes.
- Initially remain in the room with your dog but begin to incorporate short departures to another room while dog is 'invisible'
- Gradually increase length of departures
- When your dog is settled with this phase including longer periods with you out of the room you can move onto the next stage



Part 3

Transfer this 'invisible dog' signal object to the actual departure room and use this as the new leaving signal. The presence of this object is associated with absences the dog can manage. They will feel reassured and confident that you will return. This object can now be substituted for the signal previously used in the actual departure room, (e.g., piece of white card on the door)

Tracking behaviours

To better understand how your dog is behaving while you are away, your vet will likely encourage you to record a video of them while they are home alone. It is important to understand which behaviours are present and how often they occur in order to tailor the behaviour modification plan to your pet. Below is a table that lists unwanted behaviours and the frequency of these. Please complete the box that best describes the behaviour of your dog before starting treatment.

How often was your dog left alone this week?		Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Unwanted Behaviour		How often did the behaviour occur?						
House soiling	Urine							
	Faeces							
Destruction e.g., through digging and scratching around doorways or windows								
Barking or howling								
Destroying items through chewing								
Pacing or circling								
Hypersalivation								
Vomiting								

This record will give you and your vet a starting point.



Track your dog's progress

As treatment begins, you will want to compare your dog's behaviour at the end of each week to this starting record and then evaluate if the behaviour has changed.

On your way to changing the unwanted behaviours, you should note simple improvements first. For example, the number of days without any unwanted behaviours, shorter episodes of unwanted behaviours, and changes in how your dog reacts during your departures, your returns and when you are home together.

Complete the following chart at the end of each week and score your dog's unwanted behaviours by using the following scale in terms of change in how often the unwanted behaviours occur:

1 – no change	2- slightly better	3- much better	4 – nearly gone	5- not present
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Unwanted Behaviour		Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
House soiling	Urine								
	Faeces								
Destruction e.g., through digging and scratching around doorways or windows									
Barking or howling									
Destroying items through chewing									
Pacing or circling									
Hypersalivation									
Vomiting									

You dog may need to undertake this behaviour modification programme for longer than 8 weeks, so ask your vet for another logbook if you need it to continue logging your dog's progress.

During this time, you will need follow up visits with your vet. Your veterinary practice will schedule them as often as appropriate for your dog.

References:

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4. Schwartz S. Separation anxiety syndrome in dogs and cats. J Am Vet Med Assoc. 2003;22(11):1526-1532.
5. Blackwell E, Casey RA, Bradshaw WS. Controlled trial of behavioural therapy for separation-related disorders in dogs. Vet Rec. 2006;158:51-554.
6. Horwitz DF. Separation anxiety in dogs. NAVC Clinician's Brief. 2008;11:61-62.
7. Takeuchi Y, Houpt KA, Scarlett JM. Evaluation of treatments for separation anxiety in dogs. J Am Vet Med Assoc. 2000;17(3):342-345.
8. Reconcile SPC

PRACTICE NAME & CONTACT DETAILS:

If you have any questions about Reconcile® or your dog's behaviour, please contact your veterinary practice.

For more information on The **CALM**® Programme and **Reconcile**® (including video guides) check out www.reconcilefordogs.com.



Brought to you by Forte Healthcare Ltd, marketing authorisation holder of
Reconcile chewable tablets for dogs.
Reconcile contains fluoxetine hydrochloride. UK: POM-V, IE: POM.
Further information available in the SPC or from Forte Healthcare Ltd.

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