



# 1 in 5 Owners Say Pet Separation Anxiety Worsened Last Year, Veterinarians Share Solutions

- 42% of owners say that their pet has anxiety, and 1 in 5 owners say it worsened in the last year.
- Veterinarians urge owners to understand the lesser-known signs and treatments of severe pet separation anxiety.

Veterinarians nationwide are urgently encouraging pet owners to address the alarming rise in pet separation anxiety, revealing the issue has not yet improved following the pandemic.

According to a survey of roughly 2,000 pet owners on the [TrustedHousesitters](#) pet-sitting platform, 1 in 5 respondents claim they saw a continued increase in their dog's or cat's anxiety in 2023. Roughly 25% of pet owners reveal they won't travel because of their pet's anxiety.

TrustedHousesitters worked with Rebecca MacMillan, BVetMed, BSAVA, PGCertSAM, MRCVS, to help inform owners on how to recognize the symptoms of separation anxiety and the innovative treatments to ensure a long, happy, and healthy life for beloved companions.

As people transitioned to remote work and lockdown measures were implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, pets became accustomed to the constant presence of their owners. Following the pandemic, the return of normal routines, such as in-person work, caused pets that had become increasingly dependent on the constant companionship and attention to experience anxiety when separated from their owner.

Separation anxiety can have a severe impact on both pet and pet owner well-being. According to the survey, over half (59%) of pet owners requested to continue working from home following the pandemic due to their pet's anxiety, and 17% of owners revealed they worry about missing out on social and career opportunities out of obligation to care for their pet.

While well-known symptoms of separation anxiety in pets include excessive barking or whining, destructive behavior, pacing or restlessness, or attempting to escape, the lesser-known signs of separation anxiety in pets include:

- Excessive drooling
- Panting or trembling
- Depression or lethargy
- Reduced appetite
- Hiding or avoidance

**To help owners alleviate separation anxiety in their pets, MacMillan recommends trying the following treatment methods:**

1. **Puzzle Toys & Enrichment Activities:** Providing mental stimulation and distraction is a great way to prevent anxious behaviors in your pet while absent. For example, puzzle feeders are innovative devices that encourage your pets to work for their food, keeping them engaged and reducing anxiety. If you're gone for longer periods of time, a motion-activated or battery-powered toy can offer them ongoing entertainment.
2. **Calming Supplements:** Consult your vet for over-the-counter options or prescription medications. Pet-specific CBD products have also been proven to help alleviate anxiety in pets safely and naturally.
3. **Calming Music or White Noise Machines:** According to the TrustedHousesitters survey, playing music or television is the most popular way that pet owners help alleviate pet separation anxiety, with 68% of owners using this trick. Playing white noise, television, or music can have a calming effect and alleviate anxiety by meeting pets' sensory needs.
4. **Aromatherapy & Essential Oils:** Use pet-safe aromatherapy and essential oils to promote relaxation and well-being.

"The main product that I tend to recommend for anxious dogs is natural appeasing pheromones. These can act as a calming agent for these animals helping to make behavioral training easier. They are available in different formulations, such as plug-in diffusers, impregnated collars, and sprays for their bedding," said Rebecca MacMillan.

5. **Exercise & Playtime:** A tired pet is a happy pet, and like humans, physical activity can help reduce anxiety and improve overall health. Obedience training, or spending time teaching your pets basic commands, can also tire them out while helping them feel more confident and secure, reducing anxiety.

"Ensuring affected dogs have a comfortable and secure home environment can help greatly. This includes making sure your dog has a cozy bed in a calm location in the house, access to water at all times, and a consistent routine for the day. This routine should include plenty of exercise and mental stimulation, as a tired dog is usually a happy dog," said Rebecca MacMillan.

TrustedHousesitters connects pet owners with reliable pet sitters, ensuring your pets receive the love and attention they need while you're away. For more information about how to help your dog with anxiety, visit <https://www.trustedhousesitters.com/blog/pets/how-to-help-a-dog-with-dog-anxiety/>

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### **About TrustedHousesitters**

TrustedHousesitters is the leading travel solution for pet people; a global community whose love of pets and travel enables home sharing and pet caring all over the world. The service was founded in Brighton, UK in 2010 and has over 185,000 members in more than 140 countries, responsible for 10 million nights of pet sitting. A subscription gives unlimited access to short and long-term sits with no further money changing hands. Sitters explore the world while staying in real homes and enjoying the companionship of pets. Meanwhile, owners enjoy freedom and peace of mind by prioritizing their pets' well-being at home with a trusted companion.

### **How it works**

- Membership from \$129. Pay once a year to arrange as many sits as you like.
- Feel safe and secure with referenced, reviewed, background-checked (CBC), and verified sitters.
- Relax knowing you or your sitter can call a free 24/7 Vet Advice Line.
- Home & contents protection included at no extra cost.