

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

**10 December 2008**

**Promoting  
Responsible  
Dog  
Ownership**



## **Natural Therapies ward off Hound Dog Blues**

**Avoid Depression in Dogs this holiday season**

Depression in dogs can have serious and potentially life threatening consequences that could be made worse by long periods of isolation over the coming holiday season. While some are sceptical of the existence of depression in animals, **Dogs NSW** spokesperson **Dr Peter Higgins** believes it exists in dogs, and that prevention is the key to avoiding it this holiday season. Natural therapies can play an increasingly important role as an effective alternative to chemicals and drugs.

“Dogs have incredibly strong emotional connections with humans because they too are emotional and sensitive creatures. When they don’t feel fulfilled emotionally, they get depressed,” explains Dr Higgins.

“While our pet dogs are an important part of the family, the Christmas and New Year season puts a lot of pressure on our time and our dogs often miss out on regular activities and socialisation when we are away from home. It’s important they don’t miss out because their physical and mental wellbeing depends solely on us,” says Dr Higgins.

Causes of depression in dogs depend on the dog’s individual situation, but can include undergoing an unwanted change of scenery, death of a companion, experiencing boredom from extended periods of isolation, and lack or disruption of a proper exercise regime. Symptoms can include an unusual increase in amount of sleep, withdrawal from social activities with other dogs and the family, loss of appetite and a general lack of enthusiasm. This can also have serious physical repercussions, such as decrease in fitness and under-nutrition.

Remedies are available from local vets, but natural alternatives such as herbs and homeopathic treatments avoid the dangerous side effects associated with conventional antidepressant drugs. “Conventional antidepressants can have serious side effects, such as grogginess and emotional crashes which effectively increases the problem. St. Johns Wart and homeopathic treatments have a naturally uplifting effect that can calm and sooth your dog. They also avoid the dangerous side effects associated with conventional drugs that can actually worsen the problem,” remarks Dr Higgins.

It is important that the first step for dog owners is to discuss their pet’s individual circumstances with their vet in order to take appropriate, timely, effective action.

“Luckily dogs have a live in the moment view of life, and can better adapt to new situations than humans,” says Dr Higgins. “Given time and a bit of TLC, your dog should be back to normal within a few weeks.”

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