

## Dog Afraid of Nightly Walks

**Siberian Husky refuses to take nightly walks outside owner's property.**

*By September Morn*

Q. I have a 4-year-old, female Siberian Husky named Akaira whom I raised for three years. On one of our nightly walks Akaira suddenly got spooked by something I could not see or smell, and she started running away from that area. Now every time we try to go out at night she sniffs the air and does not want to leave the immediate area around my property. I took her in my car to take a walk in a different area to see her reaction, and she was fine. She'll walk a little in the day, but not at night.

I checked to see if any wild animals had been seen in area, but no one has seen anything other than our normal squirrels, rabbits, and opossums. Could something or someone that's in the area cause this sudden change in my dog's behavior? My only thought is maybe she smells something at night that she feels will harm her or me. Do you have any ideas?

A. Dogs have an amazingly better sense of smell than humans do, so Akaira would certainly be able to smell things you couldn't. Your human neighbors probably aren't any more aware than you are of the creature that's worrying Akaira, although their dogs may be. From your description of Akaira's behavior, it appears she smells something outside at night that isn't around during the day. Many rodents and other small animals are most active at night, and so are the larger animals who feed on them. Your dog's anxious reaction indicates that the mystery animal is probably a predator. These animals may include coyotes, cougars, lynx, and bobcats, any of which might make a sensible dog turn and run for home, especially if they're out there teaching their young to hunt. If Akaira smells something so scary she doesn't want to go outside, it's probably worth avoiding. If I were you, I'd heed your dog's reaction and not try to walk her in that area at night.