

Dogs & Cats Can Get Sunburn

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Q. Can dogs and cats get sunburn?

A. Cats and dogs can get sunburned. Cats with white ears are especially prone to develop sunburn on the tips and edges of the ears. Collies and other dog breeds such as Shetland Sheepdogs, who have no pigment on their nose can develop a condition called '[Collie Nose](#),' or 'nasal solar dermatitis.' This is actually caused by a hypersensitivity to the sun.



Some pets, whose hair is clipped very short over their bodies or for some reason have sparse hair can also develop sunburn where their skin is exposed. Pets susceptible to sunburn should be kept out of direct summer sun, especially in the middle of the day when the sun is particularly strong.



Sunscreens (SPF should be 15 or greater), including those developed specifically for pets and those containing titanium dioxide as the active ingredient should be used to prevent sunburn. For pets with skin exposed on their bodies, a t-shirt (children's or adult, depending on the size of the pet) can be fitted over the body.

As with humans, animals with skin that has been sunburned are more likely to develop skin cancer, so protection from sunburn is extremely important.