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## Shielding from the Summer Sun

What to consider when using sunblock or sunscreen on your pooch

As temperatures rise and we spend more time soaking up the sun, it is important to think about how all these extra UV Rays are affecting Fido. Just like humans, dogs can get sunburned. While providing shade and using UV protective clothing are great sun protection methods, sunblock can also help keep pups from getting too many rays. *Doggie Aficionado* spoke with some experts about what to consider when using sunblock or sunscreen on your dog.

"Some dogs definitely need sunblock," says Dr. Louise Murray, director of medicine at the ASPCA's Bergh Memorial Animal Hospital in New York City. "If a dog is outside during the hours or in a place where a person can get sunburned then a dog can get secondary sun."

Murray recommends using sunblock or sunscreen on dogs with white or lightly colored hair and skin and those that are hairless, either naturally or from hair loss. Along with the risk of sunburn and skin cancer, Murray says too much sun can exacerbate autoimmune diseases.

that are common in certain dog breeds.

"The dogs who need [sunblock] the most are the light skinned, short haired dogs living in sunnier climates and those that are known to have one of those autoimmune diseases."

While sun protection for some dogs may be necessary, Murray says it is important to note that dogs, unlike humans, lick themselves often and that there are risks associated with dogs ingesting sunblock.

"The pet [sunblocks], and there are several that are available on the market, are ideal, but if for some reason you can't obtain one of those, the next thing you can do is use one that is safe for babies, but you still want to be careful because some of them still have stuff that is toxic to dogs if ingested," she says.

**Dr. Alison Flynn-Lurie**, a veterinary dermatologist at **Miami Veterinary Specialists**, says along with hairless or light colored dogs, it is also important to protect pooches that are big sunbathers or spend the majority of their time outdoors.

"The sparsely haired area on the top of the muzzle towards the tip of the nose and the belly are at increased risk of sun damage," she says.

Flynn-Lurie advises using a sunscreen that is safe for children or one that has been approved for use in dogs, such as Epi-Pet Sun Protector Sunscreen.

Justine A. Lee is a board-certified emergency critical care veterinary specialist and is currently the associate director of veterinary services for Pet Poison Helpline. She says she has been called on cases where dogs have ingested too much sunscreen after licking it off their bodies.

"Most sunscreens have different chemicals in them. Your average one usually has aspirin in there. You do have to be careful because some of them do have an aspirin derivative. This is often found on the sunscreen you put on babies," she says.

Lee says most healthy dogs that have a thick coat of fur don't require sunscreen and providing good shelter is the best way to protect pooches from the sun. If pet parents are going to use sunscreen, Lee advises asking advice from a professional.

"You just want to make sure you check with your vet about the right kind of animal friendly sunscreen to use." 🐾

**You just want to make sure you check with your vet about the right kind of animal friendly sunscreen to use.**



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