CAN ANIMALS GET SUNBURN?

When the sun is shining, many of us remember to put on sunscreen, wear a hat and find some shade. But did you know that some animals can get sunburn too?

Just like people, animals can get sore, red skin if they spend too long in strong sunshine. Some pets are more at risk than others, especially if they have pale skin, light-coloured fur or areas with very little fur.

Which pets can get sunburn?

Cats
White cats, or cats with white ears and noses, are particularly likely to get sunburn. Their ears are especially sensitive because they don't have much fur to protect them.

Dogs
Dogs with short or thin coats, pink noses or pale skin can also burn, especially on their tummy, nose and ears.

Rabbits and Guinea Pigs
Although their thick fur offers some protection, rabbits and guinea pigs can still become too hot if they are left in the sun. Their hutches should always have plenty of shade.

What about wild animals?

Wild animals have clever ways of protecting themselves.

Some stay in the shade during the hottest part of the day, while others become more active in the early morning or evening when it's cooler.

Elephants even spray themselves with mud and dust, which acts like a natural sunblock!

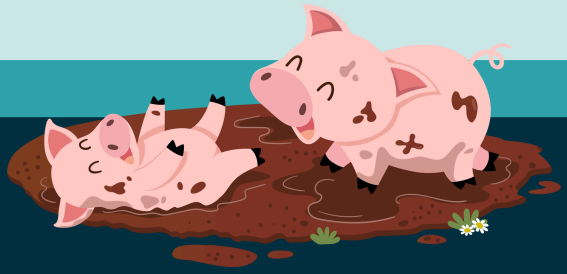
How can you help your pet?

You can be a **Summer Safety Superstar** by remembering these simple tips:

💧 Always make sure your pet has fresh drinking water.
🌳 Provide plenty of cool shade.
🚶 Walk dogs early in the morning or later in the evening when pavements are cooler.
🏠 Bring small pets indoors or into a cool shelter if the weather becomes very hot.
🚗 Never, ever leave a pet in a parked car - not even for a few minutes.

Too Hot?

If your pet starts panting heavily, seems very tired or doesn't want to move, tell an adult straight away. Pets can become poorly if they get too hot.



Did you know?

Hippos produce a special reddish liquid that helps protect their skin from the sun.

Pigs can't sweat very well, so they love cooling off in muddy puddles.

Polar bears have black skin underneath their white fur, which helps absorb warmth in cold places - but they still need shade if they live in zoos during hot weather.

Summer safety challenge!

How many ways can you help your pet stay cool this week?

☐ Refill their water bowl.
☐ Check they have shade.
☐ Help brush their coat (with an adult's help).
☐ Fill a paddling pool for your dog.
☐ Freeze a tasty pet-safe treat (ask an adult first!).

Remember, a little kindness goes a long way. By helping your pet stay cool, you're helping them enjoy summer safely too!

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