

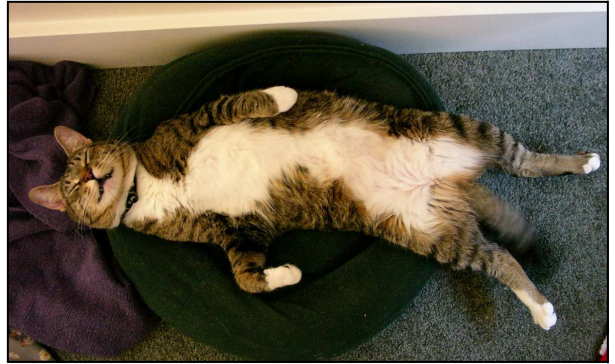
**Spring 2010**

**Protecting Your Pet From Sun Induced Skin Cancer**

Spring weather is upon us and our pets are enjoying the longer days basking in the sun, both indoors and out. As pet owners it is important to educate ourselves about the potential risks to our pets' health from sun exposure. Just like us, our pets can experience negative effects from sun exposure. They get painful sunburns that scab and peel. And, they can get skin cancer associated with sun exposure.

At particular risk are animals that have light skin pigmentation and/or have short fur. Here are some steps that you can take to help keep your pet free of sun induced skin cancers:

- ♥ Routinely check your pet's skin for abnormalities. When examining your cat pay particular attention to the ears, lips, and skin around the eyes and nose. Exams on dogs should include a thorough inspection of the belly and inner thighs. With both cats and dogs you should look for red or black spots / crusts - they can be as small as a pinprick - and scabs / wounds that do not heal.
- ♥ If possible, keep your pet in the house during peak sun hours (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.).
- ♥ When your pet is outside, ensure that there is a safe, shady spot to rest.
- ♥ Close your blinds to keep cats out of sunbeams during peak sun hours.
- ♥ See a veterinarian regularly for an exam and immediately if you notice anything suspicious.



Many pet owners ask it if is appropriate to try sunscreen on their pets.

Remember three things when trying sunscreen. 1) While applying a pet safe sunscreen to your pet's nose, ear tips, and stomach may help, many pets will lick off and ingest the sunscreen. 2) Some pets can have allergic skin reactions to sunscreen. Look for redness and irritation, with or without hives. 3) Applying sunscreen is not a license to keep your pet outside, without shade, during peak sunlight hours.

**Upcoming Events**

**Making Strides Against Breast Cancer, April 25th in ABQ** — join Veterinary Cancer Care's Team or donate to make a difference in the lives of women and pets fighting breast cancer. Call Amy at 505-982-4492 for additional information.

**Paws for a Cause, May 8th in Santa Fe** - run or walk with your dog to benefit St. Vincent's Hospital and Santa Fe Humane Society. Visit our booth and enjoy a beautiful day in the park.

**Paying for Cancer Treatment**

**The Magic Bullet Fund** is a national fund that provides monetary assistance to caretakers that would otherwise be unable to pay for their dog's cancer treatment. Visit their website at [www.themagicbulletfund.org](http://www.themagicbulletfund.org) to find out how you can apply for assistance.

Organizations like The Magic Bullet Fund could not exist without the generosity of thousands of people just like yourself. Please consider donating to the Magic Bullet Fund. If you would like to keep your money local and help to provide cancer treatment to New Mexico pets, you can donate to the Athena Fund. To learn how, contact The Santa Fe Community Foundation at 505-988-9715 ext. 3.

**Did you know that you can purchase health insurance for your pets?**

Health insurance for pets is affordable, easy to obtain, and easy to use. There are a few options available to pet owners and Veterinary Cancer Care recommends that you investigate and purchase a policy that fits you and your pets.

The ASPCA ([www.aspcapetinsurance.com](http://www.aspcapetinsurance.com)) and VPI-Veterinay Pet Insurance ([www.vetpethealth.com](http://www.vetpethealth.com)) are two of the programs available. Both plans have options starting as low as \$7-10/month, depending on your pets age, species, and the type of coverage you choose. VPI even has a cancer rider that you can purchase separately. In a time of ever increasing medical costs, a few dollars a month may purchase you a little peace of mind.



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