# Veterinary warning after cat loses ears to sun-induced cancer amid UK heat



As Britain experiences an unseasonably warm spell with temperatures soaring to 28C in late April and the potential for some areas to near 30C in early May, veterinary experts have issued a stark warning to cat owners about the risks of sun exposure to their pets. This follows a distressing case involving a white rescue cat named Bobble, whose prolonged sun exposure led to severe skin cancer, necessitating the amputation of both her ears.

Bobble, a four-year-old feline described by her owner Karen Evans as “loving” and “lively,” was rescued as a kitten with visibly sun-damaged skin, including peeling on her ears. Despite Evans’ diligent application of sun cream to protect Bobble’s vulnerable areas, the damage from earlier exposure had already set the stage for serious health issues. “The skin was peeling off her ears and had no natural fur protection when we found her, so whilst I have always put sun protection on her ears, I was also prepared for the day when the original sun damage might result in something more sinister,” Evans told The Times.

The severity of Bobble’s condition became apparent when a cyst found on her ear was diagnosed as cancerous. In a critical and lifesaving operation at Seadown Veterinary Hospital in Hythe, Hampshire, veterinary surgeon Katie Wood performed a bilateral ear amputation to prevent the cancer from spreading further. Speaking about the case, Wood highlighted the prevalence of sunburn-related skin conditions in cats, particularly those with lighter fur and skin tones. “Sunburn, especially in cats with lighter skin and fur colours or less fur can lead to skin cancer over time,” Wood said. She added that the ears and noses, which have minimal fur and pigmentation, are the most susceptible areas to this kind of damage.

Wood emphasised that early indicators of sun damage include redness, inflammation, hair loss, and changes to the skin such as flaking or curling, primarily around the ears and nose. If left untreated, these symptoms can progress to thickened skin, sores, and cancerous lesions. She urged cat owners to seek prompt veterinary advice if any such signs appear and to maintain regular health check-ups.

Bobble is reported to be recovering well following her surgery and is adapting to life without her ears. Evans is now committed to raising awareness about the risks of sun exposure for pets, especially those with pale fur, encouraging others to apply sun protection diligently.

This warning arises amid unusually high temperatures for this time of year, with the Met Office noting that while the UK is unlikely to officially experience a heatwave this week—defined as three consecutive days above regional heat thresholds—the unusually warm weather persists. Met Office meteorologist Michael Silverstone explained that heatwave thresholds vary across the UK, generally starting at 25C, with London’s threshold at 28C.

As warmer weather continues to greet Britain, the case of Bobble serves as a vivid example of the potential health risks sun exposure can pose to vulnerable animals, highlighting the importance of sun protection and vigilance among pet owners.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://medicanimal.com/blogs/pet-advice/can-my-pet-get-sunburn> - This article discusses how cats, especially those with white or light-colored fur, are prone to sunburn and skin cancer due to sun exposure, and provides preventive measures such as applying pet-safe sunscreen and limiting sun exposure.
* <https://vethelpdirect.com/vetblog/2021/05/19/can-cats-get-sunburnt-and-what-are-the-signs/> - This source explains that cats with white or thin hair are most often affected by sunburn, leading to skin cancers like squamous cell carcinoma, and emphasizes the importance of monitoring cats' ears and noses for early signs.
* <https://www.rover.com/blog/can-cats-get-sunburn/> - This article highlights that cats with white or light-colored fur are more susceptible to sunburn, particularly on areas like ear tips, noses, and bellies, and discusses the long-term risks of repeated sun exposure, including skin cancer.
* <https://www.thedrakecenter.com/about-us/gallery/vet-advice-protecting-your-pets-sun-exposure> - Dr. Michele Drake advises that white cats are at risk for skin cancer, particularly squamous cell carcinoma, due to sun exposure, and recommends keeping them indoors during sunny parts of the day to prevent this.
* <https://wcvmtoday.usask.ca/articles/2020/07/can-your-pet-get-sunburned.php> - This article notes that cats with white coats are more susceptible to sunburns and skin cancer, and provides tips for owners to prevent sun damage, such as limiting sun exposure and applying pet-safe sunscreen.
* <https://www.skincancer.org/blog/protect-your-pets-from-skin-cancer-2/> - This source discusses how cats, especially those with pink noses and light-colored ears, are vulnerable to sun-induced skin cancers like squamous cell carcinoma, and suggests protective measures such as limiting sun exposure and using pet-safe sunscreen.
* <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14666305/Dont-forget-sun-cream-CAT-Vet-urges-pet-owners-care-felines-temperatures-rise.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data