



## Interesting Case from our web site [www.fairfield-vets.co.uk](http://www.fairfield-vets.co.uk)



### "Georgie" - Scottish Terrier with malignant melanoma



Georgie

Scottish people are not well designed to cope with too much sunshine as I can personally testify!

Too many days coping with a more "changeable" climate has evolved a more pale complexion somewhat deprived of skin pigment or melanin. Consequently, I find it somewhat ironic that a small, black and generally cantankerous terrier (with a few exceptions!) which has an overabundance of pigment/ melanin has been titled the Scottish terrier!

Melanin skin pigment in humans has a protective effect on the effects of the sun generally and skin cancer specifically. Skin cancer in humans is common and malignant melanoma, an aggressive and potentially lethal disease, only accounts for approximately 10% of all skin cancers.

A higher rate of the incidence of malignant melanoma in Scotland compared to England has been thought to be associated with the fair skinned Scottish population! It is also thought that whilst excessive exposure to sunlight and ultraviolet radiation is the main causative factor associated with malignant melanoma up to 10% of these are linked to inherited characteristics.

Given that "Georgie" - a 10 year old Scottish Terrier - recently developed malignant melanoma of a toe on her left hind leg one has to assume that,

given the limited exposure to the sun of this area - and that Georgie is covered in that protective melanin layer - that inherited characteristics may have a bigger part to play in the canine species.

What is important in both humans and dogs is that early detection and removal is important. This can be especially difficult in dogs where the tumour can be a master of disguise and in this instance mimicked a damaged toenail in the early stages. Alerted to the fact that this damaged toenail was not responding to treatment as predicted we were quick to move to toe amputation to halt the disease process. Sadly, given the aggressive nature of this cancer we can but hope that this disease hasn't spread elsewhere. In the meantime "Georgie" is back to enjoying life to the full and I am back to slapping on the factor 20!

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This article is available on the Fairfield Veterinary Centre web site at [www.fairfield-vets.co.uk](http://www.fairfield-vets.co.uk)

***You won't care how much we know - until you know how much we care***