

Sphynx Cat Breed Profile

 cat-world.com/sphynx-cat-breed-profile.html

July 5,
2017

Sphynx at a glance

- **Origin:** Toronto, 1966 and Minnesota
- **Lifespan:** 12-14 years
- **Eyes:** Hazel, green, yellow, blue, copper
- **Energy:** Medium to high
- **Temperament:** Playful, outgoing, curious, loving
- **Weight:** Males 4-5 kg (8.8 – 11 lbs), females 3.5-4 kg (7.8 – 8.8 lbs)
- **Colours:** All colours and patterns
- **Grooming:** None but does require a regular bath
- **Good with children?** Excellent
- **Cost:** \$1,000 – \$2,000

About



The Sphynx cat is an almost entirely hairless cat which originated from Toronto. The skin has a delightful chamois feel due to the presence of soft down hairs giving it a fuzzy peach appearance.

Sphynx cats have a reputation for being the clown of the cat world, with a curious, outgoing and friendly personality they get along with everyone.

Hairless cats have cropped up from time to time throughout the world as a result of this spontaneous mutation. Hypotrichosis is the condition which causes hairlessness and is due to a recessive gene, which means both parents must carry the gene to pass it on to their offspring.

History



Mexican Hairless:

Two hairless cats named Nellie and Dick were given to Mr and Mrs F.J. Shinick in 1902 by local Indians, these were named **Mexican Hairless cats**. Other hairless cats have turned up in Australia, Europe, and the United States. It is not known for sure if these spontaneous mutations are all the result of the same gene, three hairless conditions have been looked into, occurring in France, Canada, and England, and symbolised by *h*, *hr* and *hd*, respectively. It is believed to be closely linked to the Devon Rex gene *re*. [1]

Sphynx in Canada:

The Sphynx story began in 1966 in Toronto, Canada. A black and white domestic female by the name of Elizabeth gave birth to a hairless male kitten, named Prune. A local science student became interested in this unusual cat, and along with his mother Yania

Bawa, a breeder of Siamese, obtained both Prune and his mother, Elizabeth. Prune was mated back to Elizabeth, and this mating produced more bald kittens.

A breeding programme was planned to mate these bald cats to American Shorthairs. The CFA granted these cats **new breed status**, however by 1971 the status was revoked due to concerns over fertility. Unfortunately, these lines eventually died out.

Sphynx in the US:

All Sphynx cats descend from four cats. Epidermis, Dermis, Paloma, and Punkie. A farm cat from Minnesota by the name of Jezabelle and owned by Ethelyn Pearson gave birth to a bald female kitten who was named Epidermis. The following year Jezabelle had a second hairless kitten, named Dermis.

Canada:

Meanwhile, back in Toronto, three more hairless cats occurred to the same queen, but in separate litters. Bambi was the first, a male who was neutered, then in 1979 and 1980 two females, Paloma and Punkie, were born. Both Paloma and Punkie were sent to Dutch breeder Dr Hugo Hernandez. Hernandez mated Punkie to Mewsi-Kal Starsky (who was from the original Canadian lines originating from Elizabeth/Prune). These matings produced no kittens, so Hernandez then mated Punkie to a Devon Rex named Curare van Jetrophin. The resulting litter produced five kittens. Two males from this litter (Q. Ramses and Q. Ra) were used, along with Punkie's half-sister, Paloma.

The descendants of these matings, along with the descendants of the Minnesota line (Dermis and Epidermis) went on to become the foundation cats of the Sphynx we know today. Domestic, American Shorthairs, and Devon Rexes have been used in breeding programmes to increase the gene pool.

Appearance



The Sphynx isn't a completely bald cat but has a fine layer of peach fuzz on the skin. Some hair may be present on the nose, tail, ears, and feet. Sphynx cats have no whiskers.

Wrinkles are a desired trait in the Sphynx. Due to the minimal hair, the Sphynx feels surprisingly warm. The feel of the Sphynx is similar to that of a chamois.

The medium-sized body is long but with excellent muscle definition. It has a deep chest and legs which are in proportion to the body. Hind legs are slightly longer than the front legs. They have medium-sized, oval paws and a long, tapering tail. Sphynx cats have huge ears, broad at the base.

The head is wedge-shaped with rounded lines. There is a slight nose stop. The eyes are large and slightly slanting with the outer corners pointing towards the ears.

The Sphynx comes in every colour and pattern.

Personality



The Sphynx is an extremely outgoing, friendly and loving breed of cat. They love to climb and be up high and are always on the go. *Part cat, part dog, part monkey* is used to describe the Sphynx.

They get along well with people, including children and other pets. Due to their intelligence, they are easy to teach, often learning tricks and happily walking on a leash. They love company and do not do well if they are left alone for hours at a time.

Health



The Sphynx cat is an overall healthy breed of cat, but as with all cats, there is a higher incidence of certain conditions which include:

- Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy
- Spasticity

Care



Sphynx cats produce more ear wax than other cats and can be prone to oily skin. Only ever use a veterinary approved shampoo designed for cats on your Sphynx. Human shampoos contain harsh chemicals which are not suitable for a cat's sensitive skin.

All cats need their teeth cared for with daily brushing using a cat toothbrush and toothpaste (don't use human toothpaste on cats).

A yearly visit to the veterinarian is essential to ensure your Sphynx remains healthy and well, progressing to bi-annual visits once your cat reaches seven.

Are Sphynx cats hypoallergenic?



No, the protein (Fel d 1) responsible for allergies in humans is in the saliva and sebaceous glands of all cats. Admittedly, due to the lack of hair, there is no shedding, but they still shed skin and peachy fuzz into the environment.

Print/download PDF

References: [1] Robinson's Genetics for Cat Breeders and Veterinarians – Carolyn M. Vella, Lorraine M. Shelton, John J. McGonagle and Terry W. Stanglein.