

## *Where do White Aussies come from?*

There are basically two ways for Australian Shepherds to have too much white in their coats. The first is commonly called Pattern White, and the second is called Double Merle. Neither one is a form of albinism.

## *What is a Pattern White?*

Pattern White and Mismark Aussies are one and the same. Pattern White pups simply have more white than they should. They can be either merle or solid. They may have “too much” white trim, one side of their face (or both) may be white, or they may have color on their head, but very little



anywhere else on their body. On rare occasions, they can even be completely white. Most often, they are born into litters where one parent is a merle and the other is a solid, but can occur in other litters as well. Sometimes it is possible to predict that there may be Pattern White pups in the litter (based on the amount of white on the parents), but it can also come as a complete surprise.

## *Is this a problem?*

It can be. In order for any animal to be able to hear, the tiny hairs in the inner ear need to be pigmented. If these hairs are not, the nerve endings will atrophy and die in the first few weeks of life and deafness (full or partial) will result. Note that you cannot tell the color of hairs in the inner ear by looking at any visible part of the dog's ears (including the hair around the ear canal). Some Pattern White pups will be deaf (or have partial hearing loss), while others won't, depending on where the pigment ends up.

## *Some of the Dog Breeds that carry the Merle gene Include:*

- Alapaha Blue Blood Bulldogs
- American Cocker Spaniels (not a recognized color for the breed, and often misidentified as Roan)
- American Pit Bull Terriers
- American Staffordshire Terriers
- Australian Shepherds
- Beauceron
- Bergers des Pyrenees (Pyrenean Shepherds)
- Border Collies
- Cardigan Welsh Corgis
- Catahoula Leopard Dogs
- Chihuahuas
- Collies (Rough and Smooth)
- Dachshunds (known as “dapple” instead of merle)
- German Collies (Koolies)
- Great Danes
- Hungarian Mudi
- Mixes
- Norwegian (Dunker) Hounds
- Old English Sheepdogs
- Pomeranians
- Shetland Sheepdogs

## *Resources*

Deaf Dog Education Action Fund • [www.deafdogs.org](http://www.deafdogs.org)  
Owners of Blind Dogs • [www.blinddogs.com](http://www.blinddogs.com)

*(Note that while both of these organizations maintain lists of dogs looking for homes, neither one of them is a rescue and cannot take dogs in.)*

Australian Shepherd Health & Genetics Institute, Inc.  
[www.ashgi.org](http://www.ashgi.org)

White Aussies Web Site • [www.whiteaussies.com](http://www.whiteaussies.com)

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## *An Introduction to*

# *White Aussies*



*What makes them so special?*