

Dog Sunburn Risk Checklist

Is your dog at higher risk this summer?

Use this printable checklist before long walks, beach days, backyard cookouts, camping trips, or anytime your dog will be in direct sun.



How to use it

Check every item that applies. If your dog has 2 or more checked items, make a sun protection plan before extended outdoor time.

RISK FACTORS

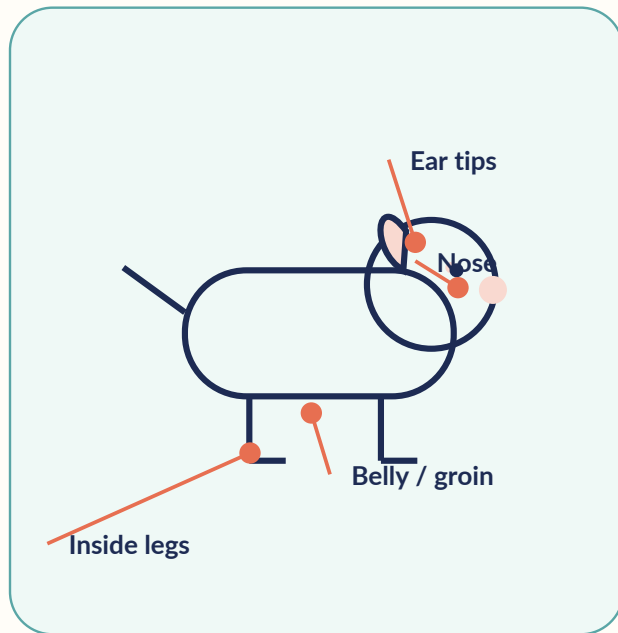
- ☐ Short, thin, sparse, or very fine coat
- ☐ White, cream, light-colored, or patchy coat
- ☐ Pink, pale, or lightly pigmented nose
- ☐ Light skin visible on ears, belly, groin, or inside legs
- ☐ Hairless breed or areas with very little fur
- ☐ Recently shaved, clipped, or groomed closely
- ☐ Recently had surgery or a shaved medical spot
- ☐ Loves to sunbathe or lie belly-up in direct sun
- ☐ Spends time outside between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- ☐ Goes to the beach, lake, park, hikes, or outdoor events
- ☐ Senior dog or puppy with sensitive skin
- ☐ Existing skin condition, allergies, autoimmune skin disease, or healing skin
- ☐ Medication or condition that may increase sun sensitivity
- ☐ Your vet has mentioned skin changes, moles, bumps, or lesions

High-risk breed examples

Pit bull-type dogs, whippets, greyhounds, Boston terriers, bull terriers, boxers, bulldogs, Dalmatians, Chinese crested, Xoloitzcuintli, American hairless terriers, and any dog with thin fur or pale skin may need extra protection. Breed is not the only factor - coat, skin color, and exposure matter too.

Where Dogs Burn First

Sunburn usually shows up where fur is thin, skin is light, or the body is exposed while resting in the sun.



Vulnerable areas

- ☐ Nose, especially pink or lightly pigmented noses
- ☐ Ear tips and thin-furred ears
- ☐ Belly and groin when lying on the back
- ☐ Inside legs and armpit area
- ☐ Eyelids or skin around the eyes
- ☐ Scars, shaved spots, surgical areas, or hair-loss patches

WATCH FOR

Possible signs of sunburn or sun damage

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| ☐ Red, pink, or inflamed skin where the coat is thin | ☐ Your dog licks, scratches, rubs, or avoids touch in one area |
| ☐ Skin feels warm, tender, painful, or sensitive to touch | ☐ Repeated redness after sunny days, especially on the nose or ears |
| ☐ Flaking, peeling, crusting, blistering, or scabbing | ☐ New bumps, thickened skin, scaly patches, or growths in sun-exposed spots |

Call your veterinarian if skin looks painful, blistered, infected, worsening, or does not improve within a few days.

Safe Sun Protection Plan

The safest plan is simple: limit direct sun, protect exposed skin, and only use products your veterinarian approves.

Safer choices

- ☐ Ask your vet which sunscreen is safe for your dog
- ☐ Choose dog-specific sunscreen when needed
- ☐ Use lightweight UV-protective dog shirts or sun suits
- ☐ Set up shade at cookouts, parks, and beaches
- ☐ Plan walks early morning or evening when possible
- ☐ Bring water and give your dog breaks from direct sun

Avoid these mistakes

- ☐ Do not use human or baby sunscreen unless your vet approves it
- ☐ Avoid sunscreen with zinc oxide or PABA for dogs
- ☐ Do not assume a dark coat protects every exposed area
- ☐ Do not shave a double-coated dog for summer without vet/groomer guidance
- ☐ Do not ignore repeated redness, crusting, or new growths

BEFORE YOU GO OUTSIDE

- ☐ Check the UV and heat: Can we move this outing earlier or later?
- ☐ Bring shade: umbrella, canopy, stroller shade, or a shaded rest spot
- ☐ Pack water and a bowl
- ☐ Use UV-protective clothing if my dog is high risk
- ☐ Apply only vet-approved dog sunscreen to vulnerable areas if needed
- ☐ Prevent licking until sunscreen dries, according to product/vet directions
- ☐ Check nose, ears, belly, and inside legs after outdoor time

Simple rule: shade + shorter outings + vet-approved protection is better than guessing.

My Dog's Sun Safety Notes

Use this page to personalize the plan for your dog and keep it with your summer pet supplies.

My dog is at higher risk because:

Areas I need to watch:

Vet-approved sunscreen or product:

Best outdoor times for us:

QUICK OUTING CHECK

- ☐ Is my dog going to be in direct sun longer than a quick potty break?
- ☐ Are the nose, ears, belly, groin, or shaved spots exposed?
- ☐ Can I add shade or shorten the outdoor time?
- ☐ Do I have water and a cool rest spot?
- ☐ Did I check skin afterward for redness, warmth, tenderness, or flaking?

Important: This checklist is for education only and does not replace veterinary care. If your dog has painful skin, blisters, infection, repeated burns, or new/growing skin changes, contact your veterinarian.