

# Why you should NOT shave your Dog for Summer



Posted by Saint Lover

To shave or not to shave, that is the question. The mercury is steadily rising each day and I have seen more and more Facebook statuses gracing my wall about dog shaving. As a native of Arizona, I have a lot of friends who still live there and of course have dogs. I have fielded questions, comments and tried to educate the masses on dog shaving. I must admit, this is a huge pet peeve of mine. For Pete's sake... DONT SHAVE YOUR DOG!

So many people fall for the "They must clearly be cooler in the summer months with freshly shaven skin" logic. **NO NO NO!**

A dog's coat works like a thermostat. It helps regulate their body temperature in both hot and cold weather, similarly to duck's feathers and down. The undercoat and outer coat form an insulated barrier that keeps the temperature regulated. It becomes increasingly difficult for a dog to keep itself warm or cool with no fur. Dogs do not sweat like people do to cool themselves. The mechanism of cooling by sweating is through evaporation. Since dogs only sweat in the pads of their paws this is not an effect method of cooling. A dog cools itself by panting. Their coat does not affect their ability to pant.

Not only does the dogs coat act as the thermostat, it also is an efficient barrier to the sun and protects from harmful UV rays. Dogs have almost no pigment in their skin to ward off these harmful UV rays and are very prone to sunburn and skin cancer. Would you hide your body all winter then head to the beach in an itty bitty bikini without sunscreen? In essence this is what's happening to your dog when you shave it and send it outside even for a few minutes to do its business. Rule of thumb, if it's too hot out for you, it's too hot for your dog. Make sure your dog has access to plenty of cool water and shade at all times.

Other myths regarding shaving dogs: to prevent it from shedding and to help with allergen control. Allergies to dogs are one of two types, dander or saliva, not the hair. If a dog has skin, it has dander so this is not preventable. There are some commercial solutions you can wipe on a dog to help with dander control but nothing prevents it. A dog sheds, end of story. Regardless of whether the hairs are 1/2 inch or 12 inches it falls out when it dies, and is replaced with new ones just like human hair. The fur is not falling out because its hot. It is a natural cycle that all dogs and cats go through a few times of year and there is no preventing it.

Dogs should only be shaved if it is medically necessary (surgery, hot spot treatment) or due to coat matting that is beyond hope (this is completely preventable).

