

Northwoods Humane Society – Deanna Persson, President

I bet we all noticed that it has been really hot recently! We can take off layers of clothing, alter the kind of clothing we wear or wear nothing and stay in the house. This is not true for our dogs. They wear the same outfit every day. Should you shave your pet's hair to help deal with the heat? The answer is not a simple 'yes' or 'no'. The following information is from www.topdog.com. Research your dog's primary breed and know how their coats should be cared for. Talk to your groomer and your vet about the question of shaving our pet's coat for the summer. Remember a Yorkie is not a husky and one size does not fit all.

We know our pet's thick coat makes them hot in the summer months, but is shaving your dog for summer effective? Will it do permanent damage to his coat? Although it may seem like a no-brainer, shaving your dog for summer could actually be detrimental in the long run.

In general, most pet care professionals do not recommend shaving a dog, but there are exceptions. A dog's coat is much different than our hair. We can shave our hair and it will grow back exactly as it was before. After a bit of time passes you'll never be able to notice that your head was shaved.

It doesn't work like that with animals. Their hair does not grow in the same way that ours does. Shaving their coat could do permanent damage. If you decide that shaving your dog for summer is something you want to do, your pet may be paying for that poor decision for the rest of his life.

Some dogs' coats actually provide heat relief. Think of your dog's coat the same way that you think of the insulation in your home. Insulation is necessary to keep your home warm in the winter, but did you know that it also helps to keep your house from heating up in the summer? Your dog's thick coat works in the same way. For this reason, shaving your dog for summer could actually cause him to overheat more quickly.

Your dog's coat also keeps him from getting sunburned. Too much sun exposure isn't usually something that dog owners think about, but when you shave your dog's coat his skin becomes exposed to the sun. Think about your skin. The areas that are used to getting more sun exposure, like your arms and shoulders, are less likely to burn. But, the areas that aren't used to as much sun, like your back and stomach, will burn after just a small amount of sun. Your dog's skin is not used to getting any sun exposure, so shaving your dog for summer could cause him to get a sunburn in a matter of minutes depending on the weather.

Other reasons not to shave your dog's coat: Your dog's fur protects his skin from debris, dirt and allergens. Dust mites, pollen and other irritants won't bother your dog's skin as long as he has a protective layer of fur. Shaving your dog for the summer removes the barrier, and your dog could develop skin allergies because of the new exposure.

As I mentioned, shaving your dog for summer could also permanently damage his coat. Some coat types will grow back as if they had never been shaved, but some coat types will grow in much differently. In extreme cases, some coats don't grow back at all or they are very patchy when they regrow.

The fur on your dog's neck, back, sides and legs will protect him from the sun. His belly won't see a lot of UV exposure, so it should be safe to shave the area. This will also allow your dog to cool off more easily by finding cold tile or a basement floor to lie on. If the coolness doesn't have to penetrate his coat it will be a much quicker process.

Summer tips to remember: Keeping your dog cool in the summer has to be a top priority, especially if he is left outside during the day. It's best to leave your pet indoors

Keep your dog's outside activities limited to the cooler hours of the day. It is hottest in the middle of the day, so it's best to walk and exercise your pet in the morning and evening. Hot pavement can also be an issue when the sun is out, so be mindful of that if you walk on roads, paved trails or sidewalks.

NEVER leave your dog in a hot vehicle. We've all heard the horror stories, and we all know how fast a car can heat up when the sun is shining. Just because the temperature outside is 70 degrees doesn't mean your car will stay that temperature. It's best to leave your pets at home while running errands in the summer.

Date to Save: July 15 – Red Schoolhouse Wines – Stone Lake – 5:15.