Canine Pruritus Scale
Courtesy of Peter B. Hill, BVSc, PhD, DVD, Diplomate ACVD & ECVD, University of Bristol

Instructions for Use
1. Print out the first sheet on a plain piece of paper and have it laminated. This can then be used repeatedly in the examination room with a whiteboard (non-permanent) marker pen. It is best if the client is guided through the use of the scale, so that they are clear about what to do. We usually give the scale to the owner and ask them first to read the instructions at the top. Then we specifically remind them that they should read the descriptions starting from the bottom (the scale doesn’t make sense if it is read from the top down). We also emphasise that they can place a mark anywhere on the vertical scale and not just next to the words. We find it helps to actually demonstrate putting a mark on the line somewhere, so that they know what to do.

2. The second sheet (with the numbers on it) needs to be printed on to a plain piece of paper, and then photocopied onto a transparency. This sheet is then placed over the top of the first sheet, after the client has made their mark, allowing the numerical score to be read off and recorded. The laminated sheet can then be wiped clean and used again.

3. Do not be tempted to use the second sheet as the actual scale. We have tested this and owners always place their mark next to whole or half numbers, which reduces the continuous nature of the scores that are obtained when using the visual analogue scale.

For Further Information


This scale can be freely used by practitioners, but should not be used commercially without permission.
How itchy is your dog?
This scale is designed to measure the severity of itching in dogs. Itching can include scratching, biting, licking, chewing, nibbling or rubbing. Read all the descriptions below starting at the bottom. Then use a marker pen to place a mark anywhere on the vertical line that runs down the left hand side to indicate the point at which you think your dog’s level of itchiness lies.

Extremely severe itching / almost continuous
Itching doesn’t stop whatever is happening, even in the consulting room (needs to be physically restrained from itching)

Severe itching / prolonged episodes
Itching might occur at night (if observed) and also when eating, playing, exercising or being distracted

Moderate itching / regular episodes
Itching might occur at night (if observed), but not when eating, playing, exercising or being distracted

Mild itching / a bit more frequent
Wouldn’t itch when sleeping, eating, playing, exercising or being distracted

Very mild itching / only occasional episodes
The dog is slightly more itchy than it was before the skin problem started

Normal dog – I don’t think itching is a problem
How itchy is your dog?
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10  Extremely severe itching / almost continuous
    Itching doesn’t stop whatever is happening, even in the consulting room
    (needs to be physically restrained from itching)

9    Severe itching / prolonged episodes
     Itching might occur at night (if observed) and also when eating, playing,
     exercising or being distracted

8    Moderate itching / regular episodes
     Itching might occur at night (if observed), but not when eating, playing,
     exercising or being distracted

7    Mild itching / a bit more frequent
     Wouldn’t itch when sleeping, eating, playing, exercising or being distracted

6    Very mild itching / only occasional episodes
     The dog is slightly more itchy than it was before the skin problem started

5    Normal dog – I don’t think itching is a problem