



The itch notebook

How to score, and the 0 to 10 itch scale



itchydog.vet

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Chapters 2 and 4 explain why this works. Short version: memory is lousy at itch. Numbers aren't.

Score the itch once a day, ideally in the evening, thinking back over the last 24 hours. The same person scores every time if you can manage it. Count all of it: scratching, licking, chewing, face rubbing, scooting and ear shaking.

This is my plain-language version, not the official research scale (Chapter 2 explains the difference). Your vet may use a slightly different one. That's fine. What matters is that you use the same one every time.

The 0 to 10 itch scale

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0 to 2: normal			3 to 4: mild		5 or higher for about two weeks: see the vet			8 or higher: call in a day or two		

Score	What it tends to look like at home
0	Not itchy at all.
1 to 2	Normal dog. An occasional scratch or lick, same as any dog. 0 to 2 is the normal range.
3 to 4	Mildly itchy. A few licking or scratching sessions a day, but he isn't waking up or skipping fun to itch.
5 to 6	Moderately itchy. Regular itching through the day, some at night. You notice it every evening.
7 to 8	Severely itchy. Itching much of the time he's awake, waking at night to scratch or lick, sometimes stopping in the middle of play or eating.
9 to 10	Extreme. Itching almost constantly, can't be distracted, sleep is wrecked, skin is often broken.

The comfortable zone is 0 to 3

Most days 0 to 2, never above 3 for long, sleeping through the night, no skin or ear infections, and acting like himself (Chapter 11).

If he's been at a **5 or higher for more than about two weeks**, or the itch keeps coming back, schedule a visit.

When to call sooner

An 8 or higher, or a dog who isn't sleeping or eating because of the itch, is a reason to call your vet in the next day or two.

Facial swelling, hives all over or trouble breathing is an emergency. (Chapter 1 has the full Red flags list.)

Photo reminders

- Take a photo of the **worst spot every few days**: pink belly, stained paws, red armpits, the inside of an ear flap, whatever bothers him most.
- Same spot, same light, same distance** each time. A window in daylight beats a lamp at night.
- Put something in the frame for scale if you can (a coin, your fingertip).
- Make a phone album just for this, named "[dog's name] skin." When you're in the exam room, you'll find it in five seconds instead of scrolling past 400 photos of the kids.

How to use these pages: print the weekly page (page 2) eight times for an 8-week diary, and the 8-week summary (page 3) once. Start a fresh weekly page every Monday, or whatever day suits you.



The itch notebook: weekly page

Copy this page eight times for an 8-week diary



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Dog: _____ Week of: _____ Week number: _____

Current flea product and date of last dose: _____

Current itch medicines: _____

Day	Score 0 to 10	Where paws, ears, face, armpits, belly, back end, lower back	When worse night, after walks, after meals, after baths	Ears and smell OK, smelly, red, discharge, head shaking	Anything new food, treat, chew, missed dose, bath, trip, boarding, weather	Photo?
Mon						
Tue						
Wed						
Thu						
Fri						
Sat						
Sun						

Woke up at night to itch this week? ☐ No ☐ Once or twice ☐ Most nights

Stools (optional, useful if food is a suspect): ☐ Normal ☐ Soft ☐ More than usual per day

Notes for the vet



The itch notebook: 8-week summary

Fill in one line at the end of each week



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After two months, this is a picture of your dog's itch bucket (Chapter 4).

Dog: _____ Started: _____ Ended: _____

Week	Dates	Average score 0 to 10	Worst score 0 to 10	Main spots	What changed this week
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					

Patterns I noticed (season, after walks, after a late flea dose, after certain treats)

Questions for the vet
