

# Emergency Deskunking a Dog

*A practical one-page guide*

## Keep This Recipe Handy



Skunking rarely happens at a convenient time. Most dogs get sprayed in the evening or late at night when skunks are active, which is usually after pet stores have closed. That is one reason to keep this recipe somewhere easy to find and the ingredients somewhere easy to reach.

Spring and early summer are prime skunk season, so it makes sense to keep the ingredients on hand during that time of year. The mixture itself must always be made fresh and used immediately, since it cannot be stored in a closed container.

What many dog owners do not realize is that skunk spray is not just a bad smell sitting on top of the coat. It contains oily sulfur compounds that ordinary shampoo, tomato juice, vinegar, and air fresheners do a poor job of removing. The goal is not to cover the smell. The goal is to change the chemistry of it so it can be rinsed away.

## Mix this fresh

*(You may even already have these ingredients on hand, but if you get caught without them, many 24-hour grocery stores and pharmacies carry hydrogen peroxide, baking soda, and liquid dish soap, so you can usually deal with the problem the same night.)*

- 1 quart (1 litre) of fresh 3% hydrogen peroxide (An unopened bottle of 3 percent hydrogen peroxide typically remains close to full strength for about two to three years when stored in a cool, dark place.)
- 1/4 cup baking soda
- 1 to 2 teaspoons liquid dish soap (Dawn Original (blue) works best, but good alternatives are Palmolive Original, Sunlight, and Ajax dish liquid. Avoid ultra-moisturizing formulas, plant-based eco soaps, and heavily fragranced soaps.)
- For a very large dog, add up to 1 quart of lukewarm water so you can work the mixture through the whole coat
- (Tip: Add the ingredients to your grocery store list now.)

## How to use it

- Keep the dog outside if possible. The smell spreads easily through the house.
- If the dog was sprayed in the face, flush the eyes with cool or tepid water. If there is obvious eye pain, heavy drooling, or vomiting, call your veterinarian.
- Mix the solution in an open bucket or bowl and use it right away while it is fresh.
- Work it well into the sprayed areas. Keep it out of the eyes, and be cautious around the mouth.
- Leave it on about 5 minutes, then rinse thoroughly with lukewarm water.
- Repeat if needed. After that, a normal dog shampoo can be used as a follow-up wash if you wish.

## Important cautions

- Never store the mixed solution in a closed bottle, jug, or sprayer. Gas builds up and the container can burst.
- Hydrogen peroxide can lighten dark fur and bleach towels, clothing, and some fabrics.
- Do not use stronger peroxide unless you know exactly what you are doing.
- If your dog seems weak, unusually quiet, pale-gummed, or has brown urine after being sprayed, get veterinary help.

## Why this formula works better

This mixture has an advantage over common home remedies because it does more than wash or mask odor. The dish soap helps loosen the oily spray. The peroxide, with the baking soda, helps oxidize the sulfur compounds that create the smell. That is why this approach is far more useful than tomato juice, perfume, regular shampoo, or simply washing the dog again and again.

Compared with commercial deskunking products, the honest answer is more measured. Some commercial products work very well and may be less likely to bleach dark coats or fabrics. This homemade formula is still one of the most reliable emergency options because the ingredients are easy to find, the chemistry is sound, and veterinary sources continue to recommend it when you need to act right away.

*The deskunking formula was developed by chemist Paul Krebaum, with this preparation guide adapted and prepared by John "Ask The Dog Guy" Wade at [www.askthedogguy.com](http://www.askthedogguy.com).*