

Do Yellow Labrador Retrievers Smell and Shed More?

Color does not affect shedding or smell, but these traits vary from dog to dog.

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Q. My yellow Labrador Retriever constantly sheds. Is this normal? And he has a “wet dog” smell whenever he gets wet. My fiancée says his black Labs never get that smell. Is there a difference in the coats of black and yellow labs?

A. It should not be all that surprising that your yellow Lab has a “wet dog” smell when he gets wet, should it? Perhaps your fiancée is exaggerating just a bit about his black Labs’ pristine skin odor, as fans of certain breeds or colors occasionally do.

Labrador Retrievers, as water dogs, have varying numbers of oil glands in their skin. Depending on how many, and which types of glands are more predominant, will determine how much your dog’s skin coat and odor are affected by water. Although there is no reported difference between yellow and black Labs, there will be marked differences between individual dogs. Like any other genetic trait, the tendency for the coat to repel water, and to have a minimal change in odor, can be bred in or out of breeding lines.

Excessive shedding is also a genetic tendency, but sometimes it can be related to low thyroid levels. A thyroid screening blood test can determine this. Excessively secreting, malodorous oil glands in the skin can also be a sign of low thyroid levels.