





## Clipping and Grooming

### ***How does human skin differ from canine skin?***

There are many significant differences, but here are a few of the most important:

-  Human skin is six times as thick as that of dogs and cats
-  Pet's hair growth is seasonal (cyclic), whereas our hair growth is continual.
-  Dogs and cats shed their skin cells every 20 days (human skin cells shed every 28 days)
-  The pH of human skin is 5.5 whereas that of dogs is 7.5

For these reasons, shampoos designed for human use can be harmful to your pet's skin. In some cases you can "get away with it", but in many cases the pet will develop dry, scaly or itchy skin and even allergic reactions are possible.

### ***How often do I need to bath or clip my pet?***

This varies depending on the breed. In most cases, at least every two months.

Poodles, for example, need clipping quite often – at least every two months. This also applies to other breeds of dogs who do not shed their coat. The clipping of a poodle can begin as early as twelve weeks of age. It is important to start animals early so that they can become accustomed to the procedure – the sound of the electric clippers and dryers, etc.

Other breeds may also be clipped depending on the time of year. Thick-coated dogs, eg Old English Sheepdogs, may have their coats cut short for the warmer months of the year. This will keep them cool and comfortable, as well as aiding in locating ticks, if you visit the coast.

Certain breeds with long silky coats (such as many of the terrier breeds) may develop mats. In severe cases, these will have to be cut away before bathing.

Spaniels are also clipped about every two months. This gives an opportunity to remove hair from in and around the ears and the toes.

Dogs lose some hair throughout the year but in the spring, the thicker winter coat will be shed. It is important to aid this shedding process by combing and brushing. A comb is used for the finer points – such as feathering on the legs – and avoids the need to brush around the eyes and other sensitive parts of the body. A good groom with a dead hair comb on the body will yield mountains of dead hair.

Dogs generally find grooming to be relaxing and pleasant. It is also very beneficial to the skin, as the grooming and washing stimulates the glands on the skin surface and produces an all round healthier coat and skin.

### ***Won't bathing my pet too often cause dry skin?***

When the correct shampoo is used, pets with dry skin benefit from bathing. Merely soaking in warm water will help in rehydrating dry skin.

A major cause of problems following shampooing is failure to rinse all shampoo residue from the skin and hair coat. If the skin is excessively dry, ask about dietary fatty-acid supplements and humidifying skin conditioners.

### ***Which shampoo is best for my pet?***

This depends on the reasons for the shampooing.

If your pet is just plain dirty, then most mild pet shampoos are usually satisfactory.

If your pet's skin is irritated, dry or otherwise abnormal, then particular care is needed. Some shampoos may help, while others can actually aggravate the problem. Advice will be tailored to your pet's particular skin condition.