



SHEDDING

Regular and proper grooming can be the difference between a good coat and an excellent coat. We at The FURternity would be more than happy to help you achieve this...especially through the shedding process. Even if your dog is not in need of a complete grooming, a thorough bath and brush can help to speed the process along. Dead hair next to the skin is irritating and can lead to an itch/scratch cycle that can damage the skin and cause further problems. If left alone for too long, excessive matting can occur and will make it very painful for the dog to be brushed out and more expensive for the owner.

Contrary to what some companies may advertise, there is no "cure" for shedding. Shedding (or "blowing") the coat is a natural cycle in every pet's life whether it's convenient for us or not.

Shedding is seasonal - usually occurring every spring and fall and related primarily to changes in the duration and intensity of sunlight. House dogs are exposed to long hours of artificial light and it sometimes seems as if they never quit shedding. Most dogs shed at least once a year (though some breeds shed more frequently) and do not shed their coats evenly. Some have a double coat composed of a long outer coat of "guard" hairs and an undercoat of softer shorter hair. When a dog with this type of coat begins to shed, the inner coat may come out in a patchy fashion and your dog may look quite moth-eaten!

Coat loss is occasionally precipitated by factors other than light and seasonal changes. For dogs, the last areas in which their bodies will expend energy are the maintenance of a thick, luxurious coat of hair. Other things are simply more important for the health and survival of the animal. Therefore, if a dog is on a poor quality food (for example), it will use all the energy derived to maintain bodily functions and let the quality of its coat slide. Poor coat quality is also frequently seen in an older animal whose digestive system isn't working as well as it used to. The same is true for dogs that have been sick or stressed. Stressful conditions typically cause hair to drop out first on the body and flanks, where hair grows the fastest.

Anyone who raises very many puppies has noticed that the mother will blow her coat when the puppies are five to twelve weeks old. She will shed hair faster than she has at any other time in her life but, thankfully, in another three months it will probably be back to normal. The same is seen in female dogs after a normal heat cycle where no breeding occurred. The main factor affecting these females' coats is the hormone estrogen. Estrogen causes the hair to drop earlier than it normally would.

Any dog that has been under anesthesia for 45 minutes or more will blow their coat within seven to twelve weeks. In some dogs it may only be seen as an increase in the normal shedding, but most dogs

will lose quite a bit of their coat. The veterinarian community doesn't know for sure, but attribute this to a stress response.

Anytime a dog is stressed, in a poor state of nutrition, or following the effect of anesthesia or certain hormones, expect the skin and coat to suffer. All of these are reversible and the coat will return to normal after the animal has returned to good health and/or the effects of the substance causing this have passed. How severely the dog is affected and how soon the effects are reversed varies with different individuals and breeds. If the coat does not seem to be returning to normal, or there is no discernable reason for the hair loss, the dog should be taken to its vet for testing.

Remember, we at The FURternity are here to help you in every aspect of your pet's life. We would be happy to arrange a bathing/grooming schedule for you and your dog in an effort to keep your costs down and you're pet looking forward to a happy grooming experience.

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