

Derm Digest

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Animal Dermatology Clinic

Advancing the Art of Veterinary Dermatology

July 2012

Summer Cuts - *To shave or not to shave?*



Right about this time of the year many people start to feel the heat of the season and they start wearing t-shirts or sleeveless tops, shorts and flip-flops. But what about the dog? He has all that fur, so he must be really warm! With no clothing to remove from him, the next best thing must be to shave him, right? It seems there is not a correct answer and there are strong opinions both for and against the practice of shaving dogs.

Some pet owners have routinely shaved their dogs when the weather turns warm believing that it helps keep their pet cooler and more comfortable. And without fail, the coat returns and the dog does not appear to have been adversely affected. Some pet owners have shaved their dogs only to have slow re-growth or uneven and patchy growth. There have been descriptions of having a “moth eaten” appearance, months after shaving the dog. This could be a sign that an underlying abnormality, either hormonal or follicular, could be present.

Sometimes shaving is a medical need such as treating traumatically induced dermatitis and it makes application of topical medication easier and more effective.

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Pets and Fireworks: *Loud noise distressing to many pets*



Independence Day brings fireworks as part of the tradition of celebrating the country's birthday.

For many pets, the popping and loud bang of fireworks causes anxiety and fear, some attempting to run away from the noise and becoming lost. For those who live in areas where loud thunder and lightning is common, they know firsthand of how some pets could react on July 4. Some pet owners have placed their pets in rooms to keep them safe from fireworks and returned later to find shredded furniture, doors that have been clawed and items turned over because the fireworks were too frightening to the pet.

According to the ASPCA website they suggest keeping your pet in a quiet room (sheltered away from fireworks activity) and perhaps using the TV or music to distract from other noises.

Ensure that the room is escape-proof and that your pet has been “chipped” or has good identification if your pet does escape.

Ask your veterinarian if anti-anxiety medication is suitable for your pet. In some cases, medication could prove helpful in reducing the fear and jumpiness caused by holiday fireworks. 🐾

Summer Cuts, *continued*

Dogs and cats do not have the extensive sweat gland system that humans possess so shaving their coat can provide a bit of coolness. If dogs could sweat like people, it is certain that someone would be selling doggy deodorant already! Although dogs and cats have sweat glands on their paws it is panting that is the mechanism that dissipates body heat.

If the dog spends time outside, be aware that without that coat, it is susceptible to sunburn, exposure to insect bites and abrasion.

A dog's coat acts as insulation from cold AND heat. It protects them from the sun's rays and its effects. Keeping the coat well-brushed and free of mats will allow for good air circulation and can have cooling effect, whereas a matted and unkempt coat can stifle air circulation and do little help in cooling the body.

Then there is the matter of single-coated and double-coated dogs which seems to affect the results of shaving. Poodles, shih-tzus and bichons are just a few examples of single-coated dogs. Their coat grows like human hair, getting longer and longer, with genetics determining the final length.

Double-coated breeds have a sturdy protective coat and a soft dense undercoat. Some double-coated breeds are Siberian huskies, Pomeranians and chows. Shaving a double-coated dog may result in the rapid regrowth of the undercoat, while the slow growing protective coat has yet to appear, resulting in an unattractive coat.

There have been reports of dogs being shaved and the coat returns, but on a subsequent shaving, the coat takes years to return.

Keeping your dog brushed and well-groomed will help in the ability of his coat to regulate his body temperature. If you must shave your dog, consult your veterinarian and your groomer and get their advice of potential outcomes. Better yet, just turn up the A.C.



Warm Weather and Pets in Closed Cars, a Deadly Combo



Use caution if leaving your dog unattended in the car. Extra care is urged when the weather turns warm. During the summer months, a closed car can reach temperatures easily into the 90's and that's in the shade, temperatures can soar over 100 degrees. Often that "short trip" into the store gets extended by difficulty locating what you needed, long lines at the register or maybe you run into an acquaintance and time escapes. A dog can overheat in a short time in a closed car.

Rolling down the windows help only a little and then you have the risk of your dog escaping or possibly dognapped. If the dog is aggressive or scared, passers-by might get bitten by your dog and you would be liable.

There have been sad endings for people who left the air conditioning on with the dogs unattended. Engines can overheat and the compressor shuts down then warm air is blown into the car exacerbating the situation.

Pet owners in Texas left their dogs in the car with the air conditioning running and came back later to find the air conditioner failed at some point. The dogs were found dead in the car along with the bowls of water, the ice cubes they had placed in the bowls melted long before.

Please consider carefully if your dog really needs to go on that "quick trip" if it means leaving the pet unattended, even for a short period of time. 🐾

Derm Vet on PetMD

Recently Joel Griffies, DVM, ACVD was contacted by PetMD for his opinions on the question "What Are Dogs and Cats Allergic To?"

Dr. Griffies is the dermatologist at Animal Dermatology Clinic – Marietta. PetMD is a website providing an extensive variety of information about pets, pet care and pet products.

The article highlights the top five categories that may cause an allergy in dogs and cats. His list:

Dust mites - It should come as no surprise that the #1 cause of allergy and asthma in people affects our pets, too. House dust mites can wreak havoc on your dog or cat's immune system, causing an allergic reaction that often displays as atopic dermatitis.

Pollens - Dogs and cats can be allergic to all types of pollens: pollens from trees, weeds, plants, or grasses. You can limit your pets' exposure to the pollens in your area by keeping them indoors during peak seasons, especially when there are reports of a high pollen count, which tends to be during the fall and spring.

Molds - Molds are somewhat regional, but if they are in your area, watch out! Mold grows wherever and whenever there is moisture, so keep the humidity in your home low, fix any leaks, and pay attention if your pet frequents dark and/or damp areas — either indoors or outdoors.

Fleas - Flea bite hypersensitivity and flea allergic dermatitis is the most common skin disease in pets. Flea allergies usually develop when the dog or cat is young (less than one and up to five years of age), but it can begin at any age. Frequent and severe itching and scratching, hair loss, and scabs are telltale signs of flea allergies in pets.

Insects - While fleas are the common culprit when it comes to allergies involving insects, some pets also develop allergic reactions to other insects, including mosquitoes, ants, and cockroaches. And just like people, it is the proteins contained in the saliva or venom of the biting insects that causes the allergic reaction. A reaction may display itself as inflamed skin, vomiting, and breathing difficulties.

Source: www.petmd.com

Did You Know?



The only dog that doesn't have a pink tongue is the chow.

It is much easier for dogs to learn spoken commands if they are given in conjunction with hand signals or gestures.

A cat has 32 muscles in each ear.

Dogs have about 1,700 taste buds.

There are almost 60 million dogs in the United States.

Cats can hear ultrasound.

Dogs have a wet nose to collect more of the tiny droplets of smelling chemicals in the air.

Cat owners are 30% less likely to suffer a heart attack.

79% of pet owners sleep with their pets.

Source: The Fact Site: 300 Random Animal Facts

Pet pictures needed! Have you submitted a picture of your pet? Go to our site at www.animaldermatology.com and upload a picture into our Pet Gallery. We would love to have your pet included in the gallery! Problems uploading? Send a message via the Contact Page and

Pet Events in Your Area

The following events are listed for informational purposes only. Please contact the organization prior to attending as schedules may change without notice. Animal Dermatology Clinic has no affiliation with these events.

Orange County, CA Saturday July 7 9am - 3pm

Costa Mesa's 17th Annual Bark Park Bath'Stille Day
Costa Mesa's Bark Park
890 Arlington Ave
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
Wash and Vendor Fair with donations and funds raised support the Costa Mesa Bark Park. Dog Wash and Dry (\$20), vendor fair, raffle, BB-Q-Canine Good Citizen Testing, adoption and rescue organizations, low cost microchip implants for \$25. Info call 949-733-4101 or mail@cmbarkpark.org

Los Angeles, CA Downtown Dog Day Afternoon

Wednesday, July 11 6:00p
Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, Los Angeles
Meet your neighbors - and their dogs - for a festive evening of mingling, music, local pet vendors, and pet adoptions at the 6th Annual Downtown Dog Day Afternoon at the Cathedral.

Indianapolis, IN Saturday, July 14 10a-2p

Annual Original Pet Carnival
Indianapolis Veterinary Emergency Center
5425 Victory Dr.
Indy, IN 4620.
Guests are asked to bring an item to donate to one of four area animal shelters (see list of items needed by the shelters at www.indyvet.com)
DETAILS: • Pets of all types, shapes & sizes will accompany their owners to the Annual Original Pet Carnival. In past years, more than 1200 animal lovers attended - along with hundreds of dogs, cats, ferrets, hamsters, and a parrot! • Attractions include an animal psychic; agility, obedience and search & rescue demonstrations; Best Dressed Pet & Best Pet Trick competitions; adoptables on site; free caricatures; low-cost high-quality pet photos; displays by animal welfare organizations, and more!
• Free refreshments • Discount microchipping
Info: www.indyvet.com

San Diego, CA Saturday, July 21, 9am - 2pm

Bark For Life is an American Cancer Society fundraiser. It is an opportunity for you and your beloved canine to get some exercise together in support of the fight against the second largest killer of Americans. Event will be at the Ocean Air Recreation Center. Form a team or walk individually. To register and get more information go to: <http://main.acsevents.org/site/PageServer>

Marietta, GA Saturday, July 21, 2012 9AM to 2PM

Admission: \$20 pre-registration, \$25 day of event
Benefiting: American Cancer Society
Bark For Life is a non-competitive fundraising dog walk event that honors the care-giving qualities of canine companions and cancer survivors (human and canine). It's the canine version of the Gwinnett Relay For Life featuring an opening ceremony, the walk, games, entertainment, and fundraising opportunities - compressed into a fun-filled Saturday morning. Dogs and their families come together as dog/owner pairs, or individuals, or to form a team to fundraise, complete a one mile walk, raise cancer awareness, and enjoy an afternoon packed with fun family and canine activities. All to take a bite out of cancer! Anyone can participate. We love to have human participants and canine pawticipants. You don't need to own a dog to start a team, sign up as an individual, or join a team. You don't even have to own or bring a dog to come enjoy the community event! All proceeds of the Gwinnett Bark For Life are included in the Gwinnett Relay For Life fundraising totals (current Relay For Life teams can even have a fundraising booth at the Bark For Life event to add their fundraising totals) to support the mission of the American Cancer Society to create a world with less cancer and more birthdays: For more information, please call 770-814-0123 or email barkforlifegwinnett@gmail.com.