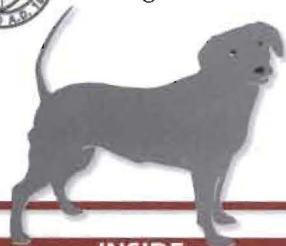




Cornell University
College of Veterinary Medicine



DOG Watch

Expert information on medicine, behavior and health from a world leader in veterinary medicine

Vol. 17, No. 2 ♦ February 2013

INSIDE

Short Takes

2

Another risk for obesity; legal victory for owners; treats recalled.

Ear Infection by Any Other Name

3

Otitis externa is actually inflammation of the outer canal with multiple causes.

Why Do They Circle?

4

Wolves circled, and today the behavior persists in very un-wolf-like breeds.

Ask the Experts

8

A neutered Poodle marks the wall and posts at the daycare center.

IN THE NEWS ...

Low-dose chemotherapy improves tumor control

A small study using frequent, low-level doses of chemotherapy has shown promise in treating dogs with soft tissue sarcoma. The therapy, called metronomic chemotherapy, cuts off the blood supply to cells that feed cancerous tumors and leaves healthy cells unharmed. It doesn't rid the body of cancer, but without a steady blood supply, the tumor doesn't grow and spread.

The treatment is in contrast to traditional chemotherapy, which uses large doses of drugs sometimes weeks apart to kill all fast-growing cells in the body.

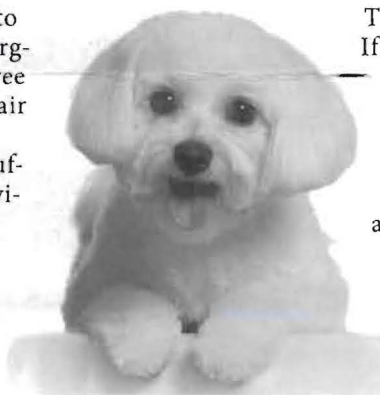
Researchers at Colorado State University treated 11 clients' dogs who had grade 1 or 2 soft tissue sarcoma. The result, reported in the *Journal of Veterinary Internal Medicine*: Less expensive, low-dose chemotherapy resulted in improved tumor control and few or no side effects.

The lead researcher, oncologist Barbara Biller, DVM, says their next step is to focus with greater precision on factors such as how to combine multiple drugs in the therapy. ♦

Enhance His Coat, Improve His Health

Regular grooming and a high-quality diet keep hair or fur in top condition to protect against the elements and prevent infection

You might be surprised to learn that your dog's largest organ is the skin. Its three layers, with a covering of hair or fur, help to protect the body. "The skin and hair buffer the animal from the environment — heat, cold, sun, wind — and make it more difficult for the skin to get infected," says dermatologist William H. Miller, Jr., VMD, Medical Director of the Cornell University's Companion Animal Hospital. "A dull, dry and unkempt coat doesn't offer as much protection as a healthy one."



BIGSTOCK

The message is inescapable: If you enhance your dog's coat, you enhance his well-being. The keys are diet and grooming.

Feeding the coat. In dogs, a high-quality diet manifests itself in thick, gleaming fur with a resilient texture. A dog's dietary needs vary, depending on stage of life (puppy, adult, pregnant or nursing), size, activity level and health. For instance, to fuel their growth, puppies need more calories and nutrients than adult dogs.

(continued on page 6)

When Weight Loss Is Cause for Alarm

It can reflect an underlying disease from cancer to liver, kidney and heart disease, especially among seniors

Most owners know that an older dog who's turned into a pudgy pooch may be ill, or, at the very least, may have a shorter lifespan than his thinner counterpart. However, owners whose senior dogs appear to have lost weight for no discernible reason need to be concerned, too.

"If the weight loss is visually apparent, it is time to contact the veterinarian," says Andrea N. Johnston, DVM, DACVIM, an instructor in clinical sciences at the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine. "Weight loss often reflects an underlying disease process, not aging itself. Minor fluctuations in weight are to be expected with variations in feeding and activity level, but if there has not been a lifestyle change or the weight loss is progressive, a thorough physical exam and lab testing should be pursued."

Among the conditions Dr. Johnston cites as the most common causes of weight loss in dogs are:

♦ **Kidney disease.** This condition, also known as renal failure, occurs when the kidneys' filtering system breaks down, causing toxic wastes to accumulate in the bloodstream. In addition to weight loss, symptoms include a noticeable increase in water consumption and urination, appetite loss and occasional vomiting. Diagnosis is confirmed with a blood chemistry panel and urinalysis. Treatment, which is directed at slowing the loss of kidney function, includes intravenous or subcutaneous fluids along with a low-phosphorus, high-quality low-protein diet. Additionally,

(continued on page 5)

EDITOR IN CHIEF

William H. Miller, Jr., VMD,
Dipl ACVD, Professor,
Clinical Sciences

EDITOR

Betty Liddick

ART DIRECTOR

Mary Francis McGavic

ADVISORY BOARD

James A. Flanders, DVM,
Dipl ACVS, Associate Professor,
Clinical Sciences

Katherine A. Houpt, VMD, PhD,
Dipl ACVB, Emeritus
Professor of Behavior Medicine

Joseph Wakshlag, MS, DVM, PhD,
Dipl ACVN, Associate Professor,
Clinical Nutrition

Marc S. Kraus, DVM, Dipl ACVIM,
Lecturer, Clinical Sciences

Margaret C. McEntee, DVM,
Dipl ACVIM, DACVR,
Professor of Oncology

John Parker, BVMS, PhD,
Associate Professor of Virology

Andrea N. Johnston, DVM
Dipl ACVIM
Clinical Instructor Clinical Sciences



**Cornell University
College of
Veterinary Medicine**

For information on pet health,
visit the Cornell University
College of Veterinary Medicine
website at www.vet.cornell.edu.



B DogWatch® (ISSN: 1098-2639) is published monthly for \$39 per year by Belvoir Media Group, LLC, 800 Connecticut Ave., Norwalk, CT 06854-1631. Robert Englander, Chairman and CEO; Timothy H. Cole, Executive Vice President, Editorial Director; Philip L. Penny, Chief Operating Officer; Greg King, Executive Vice President, Marketing Director; Ron Goldberg, Chief Financial Officer; Tom Canfield, Vice President, Circulation. ©2011 Belvoir Media Group, LLC.

Postmaster: Send address corrections to DogWatch, P.O. Box 8535, Big Sandy, TX 75755-8535.

For Customer Service or Subscription information, visit www.dogwatchnewsletter.com/cs or call toll free: 800-829-5574.

Express written permission is required to reproduce, in any manner, the contents of this issue, either in full or in part. For more information, write to Permissions, DogWatch®, 800 Connecticut Ave., Norwalk, Connecticut 06854-1631.

SHORT TAKES

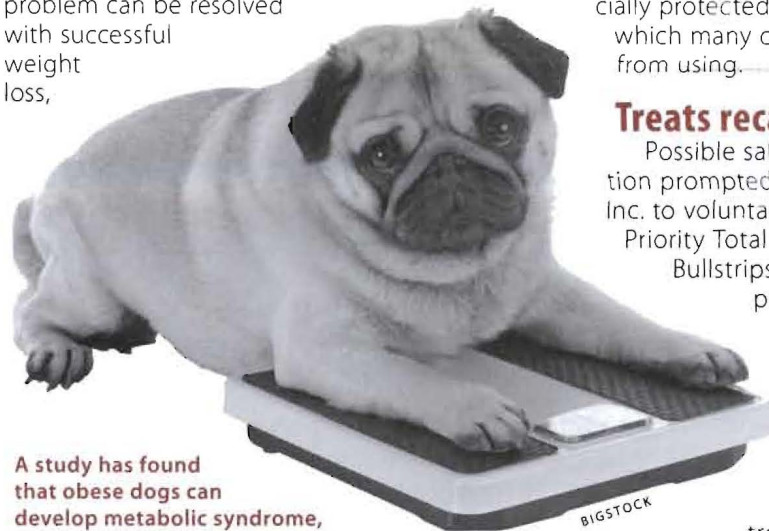
Another risk for obesity

Estimates are that more than half — 56 percent — of dogs in the U.S. are overweight or obese, putting them at risk for health problems and shortened lives. As in humans, the list of possible obesity-related consequences includes diabetes, high blood pressure, musculoskeletal disorders, some cancers and heart, lung, and kidney disease.

Now researchers in the U.K. have found that obese dogs can also develop metabolic syndrome, the simultaneous development of several conditions — such as increased blood glucose and cholesterol levels — that could increase the chances of developing diabetes and cardiovascular disease, among others.

In a study of 35 obese dogs, veterinarians at the University of Liverpool found that seven of them — 20 percent — had metabolic syndrome. The dogs had increased blood insulin, suggesting the pancreas is working harder than normal to control blood glucose. Blood adiponectin, a protein produced by fat cells that helps control sugars and fats, was lower than normal.

Metabolic syndrome is common in obese humans, but its exact effect on dogs hasn't been determined. "This new research creates a lot of new questions for us," says Alex J. German, BVSc, Ph.D., in the university's Department of Obesity and Endocrinology. "It suggests that dogs develop metabolic syndrome similar to humans with obesity-related health problems. We now need to investigate, however, what health consequences this may have for dogs. The key point for us is that the problem can be resolved with successful weight loss,



A study has found that obese dogs can develop metabolic syndrome, which can increase the chances of developing diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

and this must be a priority for pet owners with obese dogs."

One-third to one-half of dogs in the U.K. are believed to be overweight, Dr. German says. The study, published in the peer-reviewed journal *BMC Veterinary Research*, is also available at www.pubmed.gov from the National Institutes of Health.

More than mere property

The law has long regarded pets as property, but a California appeals court has ruled in favor of two dog owners who sued for damages beyond the animals' market value. A pet owner may recover the reasonable and necessary costs incurred for the treatment and care of the pet attributable to the injury, the Second District Court of Appeals wrote in its opinion.

In one case, a veterinarian allegedly "nicked and cut" a dog's intestine during surgery to remove a liver lobe and caused internal bleeding. The veterinarian also reportedly left a piece of surgical gauze in the dog. The owner spent \$4,836 for surgery and \$37,766.06 for an emergency hospital to stop the bleeding and remove the gauze. The veterinarian reportedly offered to refund the \$4,836 but declined to pay for emergency care.

In the second case, a dog escaped into a next door yard and barked at the neighbor's dog. The neighbor shot the dog in the leg, claiming self-defense although a gate separated the dogs. The owner sued the neighbor for \$20,789.81 in veterinary bills, which included amputation of the dog's leg.

The appeals court explained its decision by referring to animals using the terms "sentient beings" and "distinct and specially protected form of property," which many courts have refrained from using.

Treats recalled

Possible salmonella contamination prompted Carolina Prime Pet Inc. to voluntarily recall two lots of Priority Total Pet Care All Natural Bullstrips. The Colorado Department of Agriculture found salmonella in one lot of the two that were subsequently recalled. The manufacturer, based in Lenoir, N.C., said the treats were in five-count packages, and it wasn't aware of any cases of illnesses linked to them. ♦

An Ear Infection by Any Other Name

Otitis externa is actually inflammation of the outer canal, caused by tumors, allergies, ticks, fleas or excessive wax



BIGSTOCK

If your dog shakes his head, scratches his ear, yawns frequently, tilts his head or has a strong odor emanating from his ear, he may have otitis externa. "Although commonly called an ear infection, it's actually an inflammation of the outer ear canal that occurs when the normal defense mechanism of the ear has been breeched," says dermatologist William H. Miller, Jr., VMD, Medical Director at the Cornell University's Companion Animal Hospital.

Once the surface of the ear canal is damaged, the bacteria or yeast that live in and around the ear canal can cause an infection. When Veterinary Pet Insurance examined its database of nearly a half million health claims in 2011, ear infections were No. 1 on the top 10 list of canine health problems.

Likely Recurrence. The triggers include tumors, allergies, ticks, fleas, swimming or excessive ear wax. If the infection alone is treated, but the underlying cause can't be found or isn't addressed, the infection is likely to recur.

Some owners or groomers overzealously groom dogs, which can irritate the ear canal, leading to otitis externa. Allergies are a common problem

among dogs, and many develop otitis externa, with a secondary yeast or bacterial infection. "The allergen can be a food, drug, parasite or an environmental item such as pollen, dust mites or dander," Dr. Miller says. "The ear canal lining contains mast cells which degranulate [release granules] when exposed to an allergen. This degranulation causes swelling, heat, moisture and itching, which predisposes the animal to infection. External itching makes things even worse."

Evident Signs. The symptoms a dog owner might notice depend on the cause of the ear disease and the individual dog. Diagnosis starts with a physical examination, with the veterinarian using an instrument called an otoscope.

"This may require tranquilization or even anesthesia if the ear is very painful," Dr. Miller says. "Cytology [study of the cells] within the ear discharge should then be performed. Depending on the case, the discharge will be examined for parasites or stained to look for bacterial or fungal infection. In cases where an ear tumor is suspected, cells can sometimes be scraped from the ear canal for diagnosis. In cases of chronic or deep ear infec-

Dogs who love to swim can be at risk for the kind of otitis externa that's the canine equivalent of swimmer's ear.

tions, an X-ray, CT scan or MRI may be warranted."

Treatment depends on whether there is a secondary infection, says Dr. Miller. "If the dog has never had ear disease previously, the veterinarian should examine him before an owner attempts any treatment at home. Cytology of the ear debris is an essential diagnostic tool in most cases, but if something as simple as an ear cleaning is done before the examination, that may lead to an inaccurate diagnosis, because the cleaning can change the cytologic findings."

Ear cleaning can be a one-time event at the veterinarian's office or may need to be done at home several times a week. Afterward, the owner may be

(continued on page 4)

ANATOMY PLAYS A ROLE

The anatomy and behavior of certain breeds can predispose them to ear infections:

- ◆ American Cocker Spaniels and English Springer Spaniels tend to produce large amounts of ear wax (cerumin), which can make them prone to infection.
- ◆ "Labradors and Golden Retrievers love to swim — all day, every day, 365 days a year, so they're prone to the sort of otitis that is the dog equivalent of swimmer's ear," says dermatologist William H. Miller, Jr., VMD, at Cornell.
- ◆ Other breeds, especially Chinese Shar-peis, have congenitally narrow (stenotic) ear canals that put them at risk.

Why Do They Circle Before Lying Down?

'Wolves circled, and the behavior persists in very un-wolf-like breeds'

This occasional series explores the reasons for dogs' often intriguing behavior. If you would like to submit a question, please write to DogWatch Editor, 800 Connecticut Ave., Norwalk, CT 06854, or email dogwatcheditor@cornell.edu.

If you're curious about why your dog circles before lying down, and you look on the Internet for answers, you'll find some interesting — though not entirely accurate — theories. Some say wolves and wild dogs circled to tamp down grass to create a bed. Others postulate that dogs wanted to rid the area of snakes and insects. Still others speculate that wolves and dogs wanted to establish their space as they huddled with others for safety and warmth.

Here's the truth of the matter: "The short answer is that we do not know why dogs circle," says Katherine A. Houpt, VMD, Ph.D., former president of the American College of Veterinary Behav-

iorists and emeritus James Law Professor of Animal Behavior at the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine.

Research might provide the answer if veterinary behaviorists could study dogs using different substrates — pillows, straw, shavings and bare earth — to see if the circling differs when they have different sites, Dr. Houpt says. "We could also look at the same dogs in warm and cold weather."

For now, she knows of no breed differences in the practice. It's puzzling though, if the behavior is a remnant of ancestral behavior, why dogs who spend the majority of their days lolling on the sofa will rise at bedtime for the ritual.

"Wolves circled, and the behavior has persisted in very un-wolf-like breeds," Dr. Houpt says. "I remember a visiting Toy Poodle-cross who liked to lie on a throw pillow. She would circle before lying even though all four feet had to be together to allow her to turn without falling off."

Dr. Houpt has done some research on the topic. "What I have found out experimentally by video recording shelter dogs at night is that each dog arose every 20 or 30 minutes, circled and lay back down." Her conclusion: The dogs were probably redistributing their weight to ensure comfort, but the mystery remains pending further research. ♦

HEALTH

OTITIS... (continued from page 3)

instructed to administer ear drops. The type of ear cleaning product and ear drops vary, depending upon the ear disease being treated.

Dogs with recurrent ear disease are a different matter, Dr. Miller says. "For instance, owners of American Cocker Spaniels often have to clean their dog's ears frequently. During the winter when the humidity is lower, the ears often need less frequent cleaning. Observant dog owners will recognize the first signs of wax build-up and clean their dog's ears right away, thereby preventing a secondary infection."

Caution on Cleaning. However, he cautions, "For a good, safe home cleaning, a dog owner needs to know what he or she is doing. The technique can be learned at a veterinarian's office or professional grooming parlor."

Preventing otitis externa depends on its trigger. If a dog frequently gets swimmer's ear, the cure would be to prevent him from swimming. "In many cases,

this is easier said than done!" Dr. Miller says.

If the dog exhibits signs of ear disease after his ears are cleaned or plucked at the groomer, the procedure should be re-evaluated and changed accordingly. If the dog is an excessive ear wax producer, the ears should be cleaned regularly under the direction of a veterinarian, who would prescribe the product to be used and the frequency, and method of cleaning. "If the dog just has too much wax, we use one line of products, while if the dog tends to get a yeast overgrowth in the wax, we'll use another line," says Dr. Miller.

The best way to determine if your dog needs treatment for otitis externa: "Notice whether your pet is flicking his ear, shaking his head more often than usual, doesn't welcome being petted around his head or has a strange



Head shaking and ear scratching are tell-tale signs of ear inflammation.

odor there," Dr. Miller says. "All of these can be early signs of otitis externa. As the disease worsens, the signs will become more pronounced. Most cases are easier to treat and resolve if caught early." ♦

WEIGHT... (continued from the cover)

phosphate binders, antacids, antiemetics [anti-nausea medicine] and blood pressure medications may be prescribed.

- ◆ **Dental disease.** This condition occurs when tartar and plaque build up on the teeth and gums. Left untreated, dental disease can cause oral pain, making eating uncomfortable and causing the dog to lose weight. Other symptoms include bad breath, discolored teeth, excessive drooling and bleeding from the mouth. Treatment includes a thorough cleaning under anesthesia and treatment or removal of affected teeth.

- ◆ **Cardiac disease.** Heart disease occurs when one or both sides of the heart fail to pump blood properly. Symptoms include general weakness, tiring easily, coughing, breathing heavily, swelling in the legs or abdomen, increased heart rate, weak pulse and a bluish color to the gums. The diagnosis is confirmed with a physical examination and diagnostic imaging of the heart and chest. Treatments include diuretics to remove excess fluid, ACE inhibitors to relax the blood vessels and pimobendan to improve heart function.

- ◆ **Liver disease.** When a dog's liver function is impaired, symptoms may include poor appetite, vomiting, diarrhea, yellowing of the eyes and mucous membranes, dark urine, disorientation, head pressing,



BIGSTOCK

In addition to weight loss, symptoms of kidney disease include increased water consumption and urination, appetite loss and occasional vomiting.

and bloating. A biopsy of the liver can confirm the diagnosis. Treatment depends on the cause. For example, biliary [bile duct] obstructions may be removed with surgery, while other causes may respond to special diets and medications.

- ◆ **Diabetes mellitus.** This condition occurs when a dog's body either fails to produce insulin or doesn't use the insulin properly, causing the body to break down internal fat and protein stores for energy. Symptoms may include increased

appetite, water consumption and urination. A physical examination and tests that measure sugar levels in the blood and urine can confirm the diagnosis. Treatment may include oral medication and insulin injections.

- ◆ **Cancer.** Symptoms can include external lumps and bumps, a rough coat, vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy and difficulty breathing. Diagnosis is by evaluating a tumor sample with cytology (the study of cells) or histopathology (an examination of a biopsy or surgical specimen). Treatment can involve surgery to remove a tumor, chemotherapy to manage internal and/or aggressive cancers, and radiation.

IF YOUR DOG IS SIMPLY A PICKY EATER

While in most cases weight loss is directly attributable to a medical problem, some dogs are naturally picky eaters. If yours is one, you can take steps to encourage him to eat.

"I generally ask owners to try modifying the diet by adding something the pet likes into the food, such as yogurt, chicken or low-fat cheese," says Andrea N. Johnston, DVM, DACVIM, at Cornell. "They can also try a different type of dog food or a balanced home-cooked diet that's formulated by a veterinary nutritionist. We can also try appetite stimulants, but if the problem persists, then seeking veterinary consultation is warranted."

A fussy canine eater who's losing weight might have a more serious problem than a finicky palate. "I would worry if there is a noticeable weight loss," says Dr. Johnston. "Even picky eaters seem to maintain their body weight."

Sometimes, it's difficult to tell if a dog is losing weight, especially if it occurs gradually. "Regular weight checks are a great way to monitor and track changes," says Dr. Johnston. Of course, most dogs won't voluntarily hop onto a scale. Owners who weigh themselves with their small dogs in their arms and subtract that amount from their weight when on the scale alone can determine their dog's weight and track any changes that occur. Larger dogs may benefit from regular weigh-ins at their veterinarian's office. ♦

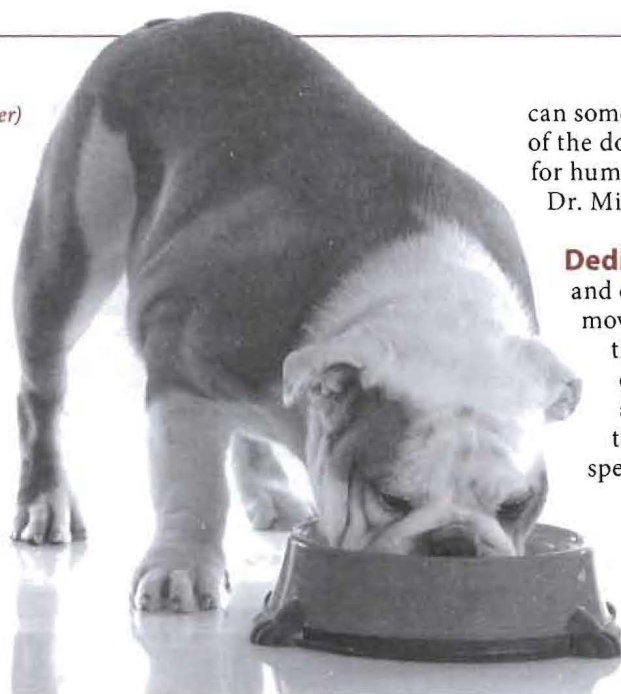
THE HAIRCOAT... *(continued from the cover)*

Sled dogs, search and rescue dogs, hunting and herding dogs, and show dogs expend more energy than couch potato pets and need highly digestible food with higher levels of fat.

For all dogs, a high-quality diet is essential to the development of healthy skin and coat. Protein is necessary for hair production and growth, and fat provides shine and helps the body absorb fat-soluble vitamins. Diets that don't contain enough protein and fat result in a coat that is dull, dry and rough. "A poor diet will give you a poor coat," Dr. Miller says.

Fatty Acid Debate. It's debatable whether you can improve a dog's coat by adding essential fatty acids or oils such as sunflower or safflower to the diet. High-quality commercial dog foods have all the ingredients needed for a healthy coat. If a dog's diet and coat are already good, adding supplements won't help, Dr. Miller says. They can even imbalance the diet if given in large amounts.

Sometimes the fat in the diet may be rancid or the food doesn't contain enough protein. In these cases, supplements can correct the deficiencies,



Protein in the diet is essential for hair production and growth, while fat provides shine and helps the body absorb fat-soluble vitamins.

but it's more efficient for the body and likely more cost-effective to simply upgrade the food you give.

When supplements are called for, it's usually because the dog has a disease that must be treated with a low-fat diet or the disease affects his ability to digest and absorb food. If this is the case, ask your veterinarian to recommend an appropriate supplement. Store-brand products made for humans

can sometimes be used; however, many of the dosages in products available for humans may be too high for a dog, Dr. Miller says.

Dedicated Grooming. Brushing and combing your dog's fur will remove dirt as well as the loose hairs that contribute to the formation of mats or tangles. Another advantage is that it reduces the amount of time you need to spend vacuuming.

Beneath the skin are specialized glands that produce sebum, an oily substance that coats hair and protects it from moisture. Brushing helps to distribute those healthy skin oils throughout the coat, making it shine.

Grooming is also a preventive health measure. Regular brushing or combing gives you a close-up

view of the dog's skin and coat condition, allowing you to spot the early signs of skin disease.

Frequency of grooming depends on the breed. Some shorthaired dogs need only a weekly brushing, but others such as Labrador Retrievers and Beagles shed heavily and may need to be brushed more often to keep the hair under control. Dogs with thick, long, curly or wiry coats usually need specialized care such as "stripping" by plucking dead hairs out by hand or professional grooming.

Even hairless dogs need regular skin care. Their exposed skin is thin and delicate. It may need to be moisturized to prevent dryness, and it's important to apply pet-safe sunscreen before the dog goes outdoors. Brushing and combing help to keep the coat clean, but sometimes a dog needs a bath. Dogs are often bathed before shows or therapy visits at nursing homes, children's hospitals or other facilities.

The Bathing Schedule. Bathing removes dander, which contributes to allergies in people. It's also necessary if a dog has gotten into something sticky or rolled in something smelly. Dogs with oily skin attract dust and dirt. It's not unheard of for owners to bathe dogs monthly or even weekly if they are sensitive to dander, allow the dogs on the

COATS REFLECT THEIR STATE OF HEALTH

Clues to your dog's health are evident in his coat's appearance and texture. The signs of trouble, followed by their possible causes:

- ◆ **Scratching, biting at the skin or rubbing against the floor:** parasites or an allergy.
- ◆ **Shiny red skin ulcer on a leg:** an itchy dermatitis known as a lick granuloma, caused by continuous licking at the spot.
- ◆ **Hair loss:** hormone-related diseases such as hypothyroidism, Cushing's disease, ringworm, mange, sebaceous adenitis, autoimmune diseases and vitamin and mineral deficiencies.
- ◆ **Painful, pus-filled sores:** acute moist dermatitis known as hot spots; infections of the skin folds; abscesses from foreign bodies or bite wounds.
- ◆ **Lump or bump:** tumors that may be cancerous, such as basal cell, squamous cell or mast cell tumors.
- ◆ **Tiny black and white specks on the coat or skin:** flea dirt.



BIGSTOCK

Monthly baths are routine when owners are sensitive to dander, allow the dogs on the bed or other furniture, or have dogs who leave oily spots on walls or clothing.

bed or other furniture, or have dogs who leave oily spots on walls or clothing.

But weekly bathing can be overkill in some cases, especially when

humidity is low. Dogs have thin skin that is easily damaged, so it's important to use a gentle shampoo. Unless your veterinarian recommends it for

a skin condition, choose one that isn't medicated. A medicated shampoo, such as one for dandruff, is usually too harsh and may cause more problems than it solves.

"Bathing even with very mild shampoos can remove some of the surface lipid layer, which helps to waterproof the skin," Dr. Miller says. "This waterproofing helps keep the good stuff in and prevents bad stuff from getting in. If frequent bathing is needed, the mildest shampoo should be used."

Discuss shampoo type with the veterinarian if your dog is prone to allergies or other skin conditions. Bathing too often can make skin worse. A bath is probably necessary, Dr. Miller says, if an odor is present or if the coat is greasy to the touch.

"If the bath removes the grease or odor, but it returns shortly afterward," he says, "the veterinarian should be consulted because the dog's skin isn't normal." ♦

A FIELD GUIDE TO THE VARIETIES OF FUR

Skin and hair facilitate a dog's sense of touch. The body is covered by sensitive nerve endings that cause him to react to or retreat from pain, temperature extremes or other tactile threats, as well as to pleasurable touches such as being scratched between the ears, rubbed on the chest or petted along the back, especially at the base of the tail. The vibrissae, or whiskers, located on the sides of the muzzle and beneath the chin, are so sensitive

that they can detect airflow.

The skin and coat also contribute to a dog's beauty and distinctive appearance. The canine coat comes in a multitude of lengths, styles and colors, from the off-standing double coat of the Nordic breeds to the pink and black pigmentation of the hairless breeds, the smooth spotted coat of the Dalmatian and the flowing white tresses of the Maltese, to name a few.

Several breeds such as the Bichon Frise, Irish Water Spaniel, Poodle and Portuguese Water Dog have curly coats. The German Wirehaired Pointer and Wirehaired Dachshund are among breeds with harsh, wiry hair that offers protection in the field.



BIGSTOCK

Chinese Crested: The breed has hair only on his head, tail and feet.

The Chinese Crested is one of several breeds known for being hairless.

Nordic dogs, including the Akita, Alaskan Malamute, Chow Chow, Norwegian Elkhound, Pomeranian and Siberian Husky, have a thick double coat that stands out from the body. Their abundant fur with its dense undercoat and harsh outer coat developed in response to their frigid environment.

The Maltese, Silky Terrier and Yorkshire terrier are among breeds with long, straight single coats. Their hair is similar in texture to humans'.



BIGSTOCK

Akitas: Nordic dogs' double coats provide warmth in cold climates.



MARY BLOOM © AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB

German Wirehair Pointers: Curly coats offer protection in the field.



Katherine A. Houpt, VMD, Ph.D., diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists and emeritus James Law Professor of Animal Behavior at Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, provided the answers on this page.

Please Share Your Questions

We welcome questions of general interest on health, medicine and behavior. We regret however, that we cannot comment on specific products and prior diagnoses. Please send correspondence to:

DogWatch Editor
803 Connecticut Ave.
Norwalk, CT 06854
or email dogwatcheditor@cornell.edu

COMING UP ...

SEPARATION
ANXIETY



DENTAL DISEASE



CANNED VS.
DRY FOOD



FIRST AID
FOR CHOKING

He marks walls and posts at the doggie daycare center

Q My neutered Poodle is housetrained, but the doggie daycare center, where he stays during the week, complains that he lifts his leg and urinates on the walls and posts. Why is he doing this, and how can I stop him?

A I assume his veterinarian ruled out urinary tract problems or other disease, such as diabetes or hyperadrenalcorticism that would cause frequent urination. Your dog is well housetrained and apparently feels no need to mark his territory in the house but does so at daycare by lifting his leg and voiding small amounts on vertical objects. The difference between his behavior at home and daycare is that there are other male dogs at the latter.

We aren't sure exactly what information urine marking conveys, but it may indicate sex, reproductive status and individual identity. Marking must have another function because dogs will mark in front of other dogs they can see and smell.

My observations indicate that dogs mark to make the place smell like themselves. I compare it to putting a picture of your significant other, children or dogs on the bedside table in a hotel. It makes you feel at home — confident and brave. If a dog begins to mark in a group of dogs, watch him because he may feel brave enough to initiate a fight. I believe your Poodle may be urinating inappropriately because other male dogs in the area make him feel insecure enough to require the comfort of marking.

Marking is a male behavior, and the male hormone testosterone influences it. Castration reduces marking but only in half of the cases. Apparently your dog is in the half who is independent of the hormone. You could try masking his sense of smell or have him wear diapers or piddle pants, but it might be more practical and more pleasant to offer to cover your Poodle's favorite

marking areas with impermeable, easily washable material if the daycare center agrees.

Meanwhile, try to videotape or use a webcam to see what happens just before and after he marks. This may reveal the true reason for this behavior.

He won't stop licking us

Q Our Miniature Schnauzer, a rescue dog about 6 or 7 years old, has the annoying habit of licking. He jumps up on the couch with us and licks our hands until we make him get down. He's a good dog and otherwise well behaved. What can we do?

A In general dogs do not lick themselves very much, although it varies from dog to dog. Licking in puppies is a form of begging. The puppy licks the mother's face at the corner of her mouth so that she will regurgitate semi-digested food. This is the canine version of baby food.

We have neotenized dogs — that is, selected for more and more puppy-like behaviors, and licking is one of them. Licking that persists into adulthood is usually directed at a human as a demand for attention.

It can be a compulsive disorder, often due to underlying anxiety. To help decrease this behavior, restructure your relationship by identifying and eliminating all forms of positive reinforcement for undesirable behaviors and using positive reinforcement for desirable behaviors.

In restructuring the relationship, you should initiate all the attention you give to your dog. He receives attention only when calm and quiet and must earn your attention by performing a task such as sit. You must be consistent!

When undesirable behaviors occur, all positive reinforcement — such as eye contact, speaking to him and even pushing him away — must be eliminated.

Finally, all pets benefit from predictable environments and regular exercise, such as play periods, walks and interaction. ❖

CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor
DogWatch®
800 Connecticut Ave.
Norwalk, CT 06854
dogwatcheditor@cornell.edu

SUBSCRIPTIONS

\$39 per year (U.S.)
\$49 per year (Canada)

Single copies of back issues are available for \$5 each. Call 800-571-1555

For subscription and customer service information, visit www.dogwatchnewsletter.com/cs or write to: DogWatch, P.O. Box 8535, Big Sandy, TX 75777-8535.

OR CALL TOLL FREE: 800-829-5574