

# Bathing Your Dog

Canine Health



## CARE SHEET

Developed with and approved by a Qualified Veterinarian

Bathing is rarely a favorite past time of dog or owner, but every dog can benefit from an occasional bath. Introduce bathing early and slowly. Some dogs learn to enjoy their baths, and almost all of them can learn to tolerate them.

**Brush First** Long or double-coated dogs need to have the mats brushed out of their coats before bathing. Otherwise, the mats become tighter and more difficult to remove. Refer to PETCO's Grooming Your Dog Care Sheet for information on brushing your dog. Short-coated breeds are generally wash and wear. A good hose-down in the back yard is often all they need.

Dogs that are brushed regularly and are free of parasites need very few baths. Bathing a dog too frequently will actually strip the coat of its protective oils, and cause an over production of those oils. That can cause the dog to have a stronger smelling coat.

A quick solution for a dirty dog is instant dry shampoo or pre-moistened wipes. These clean off surface dirt and doggy odor until you can bathe your canine friend.

**Where to Bathe** If the weather is nice, bathing outside with the hose in a big tub works. Dog-grooming tubs are available that include a convenient nozzle for rinsing.

Large dogs can stand on the ground while you bathe them.

Indoors, a shower with a hand held shower massage is the easiest. Bathing a dog in a regular bathtub is messy and often hard on the back. Tiny dogs can be bathed in a kitchen sink. Or use the self-service option at a PETCO Grooming Salon, where you can wash your dog in a professional grooming tub, and leave the mess behind.

### Supplies Needed

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waterproof collar and leash | <input type="checkbox"/> Shampoo and conditioner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Towels                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral oil             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Treats                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-slip surface        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cotton balls                | <input type="checkbox"/> Ear cleaner             |

**Before the Bath** Collect your supplies and cover the bottom of the bathing area with a non-slip surface such as a bath mat. Make certain the sink, tub, or shower is clean and free of soap or other residue.

Select a shampoo that is suited to your dog's coat. There are special products for white dogs, soothing ones for dry skin, flea baths, and conditioners for dry coats, among others.

If you are using a spot-on flea product, avoid flea dips or flea shampoos. Check the label of the flea repellent you use to see if shampoo washes it out. You may need to re-apply once the coat is dry.

To prepare for the bath, leash your dog so he can't take off.

Put cotton balls in his ears, and maybe a little mineral oil around his eyes to prevent soap irritation.

# Bathing Your Dog

Canine Health



## CARE SHEET

Developed with and approved by a Qualified Veterinarian

**The Bath** To bathe your dog, start at the head, and soak the dog's coat with tepid, not hot, water, moving toward the tail. You will need a lot of water pressure to reach the skin and thoroughly wet the coat of a longhaired dog.

Once thoroughly soaked, start at the head with shampoo. Work up a good lather, being certain to avoid ears and eyes. Fleas migrate to the head if you start on the dog's back or chest. You may want to mix some water into the shampoo to make it easier to lather. Following label directions, leave flea or skin conditioning shampoos on for several minutes.

Starting at the head again, thoroughly rinse until no more shampoo washes out and the water runs clear. If you leave shampoo in the coat, it can cause dullness and skin irritation.

When all shampoo is out of the coat, remove the cotton balls from your dog's ears. Use a towel to dry the surface of your dog's coat. Longer coated dogs may need blowing out with a hair dryer on the cool setting. This will also remove a lot of dead hair, and can be used effectively on double-coated breeds.

Be sure the dryer is not too hot, or too close to your dog's skin or ears. Introduce the hair dryer to him slowly if he is not familiar with it. Don't leave the dog in a crate with the dryer blowing on him. It will quickly get too hot. Leave this method to the professionals who have specially made dryers.

On a nice day, air-drying outside is fine, or indoor air-drying on a towel in his crate. But if you air-dry outdoors, your dog will probably head straight for the grass and roll around in it.

**Cleaning the Ears** Always dry out your dog's ears after a bath. Dry with a pad. Never put anything smaller than a finger down your dog's ears. Cotton swabs can push dirt and debris deeper into the ear canal, and could even puncture his eardrum.

Floppy-eared dogs, especially Cocker Spaniels, Labrador Retrievers, and Golden Retrievers are prone to ear infections. If your dog swims regularly, dry out his ears after swimming.

If the ears smell or are excessively dirty, a trip to the vet is in order. Regular maintenance on your part will help prevent infections and keep your dog's ears healthy. Products specifically designed for ear washing are available at PETCO. Follow label directions, and don't forget to dry the ears after cleaning them.