

Battling Doggie Dander

Learn effective bathing for sensitive skin as well as nail clipping techniques.

By Kathy Salzberg, NCMG

Q. I have a few questions about my dog that I hope you will not mind answering. My breeder raises Boston Terriers and says that you can wash them with baby shampoo. Right now, I do only wash her with that, but her coat is never shiny and she always has dander. Can you help me out please? In addition, what would you suggest for nail clippers?

A. For starters, I would bathe her in oatmeal shampoo. Oatmeal is an effective remedy for dry, flaky skin and itching. Leave the lather on for 15 minutes then rinse thoroughly and if you can find some oatmeal conditioner follow up with this, as well. Eventually you can switch to a tearless shampoo made for puppies and kittens. Since your Boston Terrier has sensitive skin, a fragrance-free hypoallergenic shampoo would work best. Human hair products, even baby shampoos, are drying to a dog's coat, while quality pet products are pH balanced to suit the dog's skin.

I would also consider switching her food to a holistic fish-based type because I have seen this type of diet work wonders for dogs with dry skin as well as allergy problems. Eagle Pack makes one called Holistic Select Anchovy, Sardine & Salmon Meal Formula. A holistic veterinarian I know recommends rotating this with the company's Lamb Meal & Rice Formula, which is enhanced with oatmeal to offer more variety in taste and protein sources.

One of the few truly American breeds, this loyal little dog with its pleasing personality descends from tougher ancestors: Bulldogs and Bull Terriers of old. It's a wash-and-wear dog, needing only an occasional rub from a rubber curry brush to keep loose hair at bay. Wipe out facial wrinkles with a cotton ball moistened with warm water and clean her ears with ear wash, available where pet products are sold. After bathing or grooming, you can make her coat even more sleek and shiny by rubbing some coat conditioner on your hands before rubbing it on her for a finishing touch.

I recommend the pliers-type nail clippers and would start using them while she's a puppy to get her used to this procedure. Clip only the tips to avoid cutting the quick: the vein inside each nail that bleeds and causes discomfort if you nick it. Do this on a monthly basis to prevent overgrown nails that can break off, becoming sore, and infected, or splay her neat little feet if they get too long. The newer battery-powered nail trimmers would also work well on your dog.