

## Dog Detanglers and Coat Conditioners

**Breeds prone to dry, sensitive skin can benefit from specialized grooming products.**

*By Kathy Salzberg, NCMG*

Q. I have two Bichons Frises. My female gets matted very quickly and my male is always licking and biting his feet. Our vet gave us DVM Relief shampoo and spray for him but I don't feel this is doing the job. My husband and I brush them at least once a day with both a slicker and rake, and occasionally use a mat breaker, in addition to regular visits to the groomer. How well do detangle shampoos and conditioners work and what are some brands you recommend?

A. Bichons are among the happiest and most lovable of small dogs but they are notorious for having very sensitive skin. It sounds like you and your husband are extremely conscientious about their care and I applaud you for that.

As for the products your vet recommended, I can't speak to how effective they are because I haven't used them but I have another recommendation for you. First, shampoo them with anti-itch Micro-tek Medicated Shampoo, manufactured by EQyss Grooming Products. It works wonders on dogs like yours in the grooming salon. Lather them up, careful not to get suds in their eyes, and leave it on for five to ten minutes, then rinse thoroughly with lukewarm water.

Also from EQyss, Premier Conditioner Coat Conditioning Cream Rinse and Detangler may help with your female's matting problem. Use it on both dogs. Applied after shampooing, it will make the hair softer and more manageable, plus it will make their coats fluff up like never before. You should still get the coat as mat-free as possible before bathing, but this product will condition dry, brittle hair and work wonders on detangling any leftover mats, making brushing a breeze. And speaking of brushing, make sure you and your husband are not bearing down too hard with that wire-bristled slicker brush. Bichons are highly susceptible to "slicker burn," a skin irritation cause by brushing them too vigorously!

Kathy Salzberg, NCMG, is a Certified Master Groomer and writer who has been grooming pets since 1976. With her daughter Missi, she owns The Village Groomer in Walpole, Mass. She has also written extensively on pet care for several consumer magazines and authored three books on dogs and careers with pets. Kathy lives with her pets on Cape Cod.

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