

Dog Coat Gunk Removal

Home remedies, professional products, and shaving can help remove adhesive or grease from a dog's coat.

By Kathy Salzberg, NCMG

Q. I need to remove some adhesives from my dog's hair. Can anything help?

A. This is a question that always elicits a flurry of home-remedy-type answers, including some that might work and others that could harm your pet. During my many years of grooming, I have seen dogs that have had motor oil, bacon grease, salad dressing, pine pitch, road tar, and greasy septic tank overflow on their coats.

Suggested cure-alls have included peanut butter, mayonnaise, dish detergent, rubbing alcohol, Simple Green household cleaner, eucalyptus oil, tea tree oil, and nail polish remover. If your dog has been through a trauma or surgical procedure that required him to wear an adhesive bandage, using alcohol would obviously not be a good idea. If the area was still sore or scabbed over, it could sting and hurt the pet. As for nail polish remover, that would be a big no-no. It contains acetone which could poison your dog as it is absorbed through its skin or if he licks the area where it has been applied.

Peanut butter or mayonnaise might soften it up for removal, but would create a mess of their own. Detergents or household cleaners would probably do the trick but may be too harsh for some dogs' skin. Eucalyptus and tea tree oil would not harm the pet, but would require a follow-up shampoo to remove the oily residue from the coat.

The good news is you don't need to resort to home remedies. There are now de-greasing shampoos that safely and effectively remove oil and grease from the pet's coat. The one we use in my salon is manufactured by PurePet and it comes in a jar like cold cream. It does not leave any residue and leaves the coat bright and shiny. It is even used on sea birds and aquatic animals who have been victims of oil spills.

You also might opt for another solution. Most of the time, if a dog has been treated for a wound or had surgery, the vet or vet tech shaves the area that is being treated. This can result in some funny-looking haircuts as groomers wait for the area to grow out. The good news is the hair will grow back, so unless that adhesive stuck right to the skin, your groomer could shave it from the dog's coat. Unless there is another underlying health problem, eventually your dog's coat will be fluffy or flowing once more.