

Elizabethan Dog Collars Prevent Scratching

These soft collars can help to temporarily alleviate problems with scratching and biting own skin.

By Kathy Salzberg, NCMG

Q. What can you tell me about using a soft Elizabethan collar for a dog that constantly scratches and bites his skin? He has been seen by our vet and prescribed medication already, but I'm looking for something to stop him from further destroying his coat and skin.

A. I think an Elizabethan dog collar is a workable idea to temporarily alleviate some of the scratching, but I hope your vet gets to the root of the problem and finds a way to prevent your dog's itching and self-destructive behavior. You are correct to seek a soft "E-collar", as we call them in the grooming shop.

The harder plastic ones we use to keep problem pets from biting us as we carry out necessary grooming procedures would not be a viable solution at home. These devices can cause great stress if left on an unattended pet, causing him to walk into walls and possibly injure himself in his attempts to get the contraption off his head. They should only be used when a dog is being monitored.

The soft version may be a helpful alternative for pets like yours that have skin problems or those recovering from surgery, to prevent them from licking at their incisions. They fit around the dog's neck like a washable pillow, tying with a drawstring. Several online pet suppliers sell these softer collars. Make sure to monitor your dog's reaction to the medication, and see your vet again if the situation doesn't start to improve.

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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