

A Puppy's First Trip to the Groomer

When should you take a puppy for her first grooming experience?

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Q. We have a nine-week-old Yorkshire Terrier-Poodle mix. When should she go in for her first clipping?

A. We usually see puppies like yours for the first time when they are around four months of age. Once she has had her second series of puppy shots and has been housetrained, you can take your puppy in to be groomed. It's wise to do some research before you book an appointment. Her first visit with the dog groomer may cause you some trepidation so you need to find someone who makes you feel comfortable when you leave your dog in his or her care. Reputable groomers will welcome your exploratory visit. Bring your dog along so she can meet the groomer too. The salon should look and smell clean and you should be able to observe the groomers working on other dogs. The groomer should be willing to answer any questions you may have.

We try to get young puppies – and senior dogs – in and out as soon as possible, both for their comfort and to accommodate their owners. Poodle mixes like yours need frequent grooming to make them look their best, ideally every four to six weeks. To keep her coat from getting knotted between visits, use a gentle slicker brush a couple of times a week, making sure you are brushing all the way to the skin, not just the coat's top layer. Check your brush work with a stainless steel comb to make sure no tangles have been left behind.

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