

## My Puppy's First Month

**From a first car trip to visits with the veterinarian, Mischief's owner records their progress.**

*Susan Bertram*

Day 10

Pee-eww! Mischief got sprayed by a skunk last night. I let him out about 10pm to go potty before bed, and heard a scuffle and a yelp. Boy, does he reek! (Ah, the joys of living in the country.) Off to the groomer for decontamination. The groomer offered to sell me the deodorizing treatment to do myself at home, but I think I'll leave this one to the professionals.

Later: Mischief's home and only a wee bit stinky still. The groomer found some yucky stuff in his ears and said he could have an ear infection. We went straight to the vets. Sure enough a mild yeast infection in both his ears. We have some medicated drops to put in and an ear cleaner we can use to dry his ear canals after his baths to help prevent future infections. Day 11

That little rascal! I was painting a chair on the back porch, and the phone rang, so I went inside to answer it, forgetting Mr. Mischief was outside, too. Had fun with the paint brush. Got paint all over his paws and face. I could wash off what was still wet, but called for advice on the dried-on paint. The vet said to go ahead and use nail polish remover on a rag, but then bathe him immediately afterward to remove any residue and be sure to not let him lick his fur. Worked like a charm!

Day 14

Mischief's been scratching a lot, and he has dandruff, which is getting worse. I keep bathing him, but it's not helping. What to do?

Later: I called the vet to ask if there was a medicated shampoo I should use on Mischief. The technician said I should have him checked because there are many causes of itchy skin and different remedies. Mischief was due for his follow-up de-worming anyway, so away we went.

Dr. Thoroughgood asked if Mischief had a new collar (could make him fussy around his neck), checked for fleas with a flea comb (none found), then did a skin scraping test to check for two types of microscopic creepy-crawlers: red mite and walking dander mites, but didn't find any. Whew!

She also asked what shampoo I'd been using. Human baby shampoo: I thought it would be the gentlest. Dr. T. explained that baby shampoo, although pH-balanced for people, is way too acidic for puppies, and probably caused the dandruff and itching. Wow. There's so much to learn! I purchased a neutral pH, soap-free, hypoallergenic puppy shampoo, and after his bath Mischief already seems more comfortable.

I programmed my phone today, so I can auto-dial Dr. T.'s office. Should be a big time-saver.