

Bathing Your Cat

Reasons to Bathe Your Cat

Cats, by nature, are very good groomers. They have pointy structures on the surface of their tongues, called *papillae*, which are designed to be an essential grooming tool. While they do a good job on their own, there are situations when your cat may need a bath:

- If your cat comes in contact with a potentially hazardous substance or sticky material
- If you are allergic and want to keep pet dander to a minimum
- If your cat goes/or gets outside and comes in contact with dirt or fleas

Preparing For A Bath

Even the calmest of cats may become stressed around water. Preparation prior to bath time will assist you in creating a low stress environment for the bathing process. Make sure you have shampoo labeled for feline use and appropriate age, a washcloth for wiping your cat's face/head, and a soft towel to dry your cat after bathing. Also, wear appropriate clothing to shield your arms from scratching/biting.

It may be beneficial to have another person assist you in restraining your cat during the bath. If you are comfortable doing so, you can trim your cat's nails the night before bathing to minimize the chance of scratches. If you have a long-haired cat, a good brushing prior to bath time will reduce the amount of loose/matted fur.

The Bath

1. We recommend using a bathtub or sink with a spray nozzle to assist in wetting and rinsing your cat. If you don't have this, you can use a regular sink or tub by filling it with 3 to 5 inches of lukewarm water. Test the water to make sure it is not too hot or too cold for your cat.

2. If you are using a spray nozzle, wet down your cat's entire body with warm water. Try to avoid getting water in the eyes, ears, and nose. If you are using a sink or tub without a spray nozzle, gently place your cat into the tub and use your hand or a washcloth to wet down the fur.
3. Carefully massage the shampoo into the fur, paying close attention to the labeled directions regarding the amount of product and length of time needed to effectively clean your cat. Don't forget to lather those hard-to-reach areas, such as under the armpits. Avoid getting any shampoo in your pet's eyes, ears, nose, or mouth. Use the washcloth to wipe the face/head with water.
4. Use the spray nozzle to rinse your cat thoroughly. If you are not using a spray nozzle, use the water in the tub to rinse the cat. Drain and refill the sink or tub a few times to make sure you have removed all of the shampoo from the fur.
5. Check the cat thoroughly for any areas that have not been well rinsed. Long-haired cats can take longer to rinse. Also, don't forget to check the feet, under the chin, under the abdomen and chest, and any other areas that can be hard to rinse. Shampoo residues left on the skin and fur can be irritating; the cat may also lick them off later, which can cause illness.
6. When rinsing is complete, towel dry your cat. Since your cat will still be damp, be sure to keep your cat in a well-controlled climate until completely dry. You may also try to use a hair-dryer, on a low setting, to assist in drying if your cat will tolerate it.

Caution!

If you use a blow dryer to dry your cat, make sure the dryer does not get too hot.