

# Selecting a Groomer

- Groomers are not regulated or licensed by a government agency.
- When looking for a groomer, seek recommendations from friends, veterinarians, trainers, and boarding facilities.
- When looking for a groomer, visit the grooming facility during regular business hours to check the cleanliness and observe how pets are handled.
- When visiting a grooming facility, ask about its health policies, including proof of vaccination.
- Some services, such as dental cleanings, should only be provided by a veterinarian.
- Brushing your pet and handling its paws at home can help make your pet more comfortable when it's time for professional grooming.

### How Do I Find a Groomer?

Choosing a grooming facility based on an ad in the Yellow Pages or on the Internet is not the best way to select a groomer. Because groomers are not regulated or licensed by any government agency, the skills and experience of groomers can vary greatly.

A good way to start looking for a groomer is by asking for recommendations from friends, veterinary hospitals, boarding facilities, and animal trainers. You can also visit Web sites, such as those of the National Dog Groomers Association of America ([nationaldoggroomers.com](http://nationaldoggroomers.com)) and the Professional Cat Groomers Association of America ([professionalcatgroomers.com](http://professionalcatgroomers.com)). These organizations provide groomers with education and certification and may be able to recommend a groomer in your area. You may also want to consult the Better Business Bureau ([bbb.org](http://bbb.org)) to ensure that no complaints have been lodged against a grooming facility that you are considering.

### What Kind of Grooming Facility Is Best?

First, decide whether you would prefer to take your pet to a grooming facility or to have a mobile

groomer come to your home. In general, mobile groomers charge a little more for convenience.

Before taking your pet for grooming, stop by the facility during regular business hours to see the facility and watch the groomer(s) in action. Ensure that the facility is clean and well-ventilated and that the cages look comfortable. If possible, watch the groomer(s) as he or she grooms pets, noting whether the pets are handled gently and appear stressed. If the facility uses heat-producing dryers, ask how the staff ensures that pets are not burned or overheated.

Ask about the facility's health policy. If it doesn't require proof of vaccination, it is in your pet's best interest to go elsewhere. Ask about the policy on accepting sick pets. For example, coughing dogs may carry a contagious disease that can spread to your dog. For references, you may ask the facility for contact information of current clients.

### What Services Should Be Included in Grooming?

It's important to discuss what is included with the grooming fee. Most facilities offer bathing, drying, brushing, clipping, ear cleaning, and nail trimming.

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In most cases, there is an additional fee for animals that are severely matted or need additional shaving. If your pet has skin allergies, consider taking your own hypoallergenic shampoo to the groomer to avoid skin flare-ups.

Some services should only be performed by a veterinarian. Proper dental cleanings should be done while a pet is under general anesthesia to allow a veterinary professional to remove plaque

## Choices and Considerations

and tartar from beneath the gum line with minimal stress to the patient. In addition, only a veterinarian should empty anal glands. If your pet has frequent ear infections, ask your veterinarian whether a groomer should pluck ear hair. Pets requiring any kind of tranquilizer or sedative, such as cats that are severely matted, should be groomed at a veterinary facility where they can be closely monitored.

### How Can I Make Grooming a Positive Experience for My Pet?

If your pet will require a lot of grooming throughout his or her life, start familiarizing your pet with the grooming facility when he or she is young. At home, try to brush your pet and handle his or her paws on a daily basis. The more comfortable your pet is with being handled, the more tolerant and stress-free he or she will be at the groomer.