

Regular grooming not only helps your puppy look her best but it also helps promote good health.

- 1. Keep the puppy's nails short.** If you can hear the clicking of the nails on the floor, then they are too long. Long nails cause discomfort, can cause the puppy to walk irregularly and, if left unattended, can deform the paws. We prefer to use a nail grinder rather than a clipper on our puppies and dogs. The clipper can create a jagged edge, which can catch and tear the nail. You're also more likely to cut the quick of the nail with the clippers. The grinder gives a smoother edge. The nails should be done about once a week.
- 2. Keep the ears clean.** Wipe them out with a cotton ball moistened with rubbing alcohol or mineral oil.
- 3 Brush your puppy often** - at least 3 times a week. Even shorthaired dogs need to be brushed regularly, so that dead hair does not collect on the coat. Your groomer can advise you on the proper tools, but usually a soft-bristled brush is good for short-haired dogs, while longer-haired ones might use a wire brush or clicker. Longhaired dogs may also need combing and some need a shedding blade. Do not allow mats to form, as they are very difficult to remove. Also, be sure that feces do not collect in the hair around the anus of a long-haired dog. You might want to keep the hair there trimmed short to help keep it clean. By the way, a dog's coat not only keeps her warm in the winter, but also helps cool her cool in the summer so shaving a dog is not a good idea and does not make her feel cooler.
- 4. In the winter, be sure to wipe your puppy's feet clean after she is out in the snow.** Make sure to remove any snow or ice that collects in the pads of the paws. Salt used to melt snow can burn the puppy's pads, so be sure to wipe off their feet.
- 5. Your puppy's teeth need to be cleaned.** Dogs can develop tartar and gum disease, and eventually lose teeth. You can use a toothbrush and toothpaste to do this. Be sure to use products made especially for dogs. Dogs do not spit out the toothpaste, they swallow it, and so it needs to be a kind that is safe for them to swallow. It's usually made so that its taste is agreeable to them. Or, you can use a tooth scaler and clean the dog's teeth that way. Teeth should be brushed everyday and scaled about once a week.
- 6. Puppies need to be bathed** usually about once a month. Bathing too often will dry out their coats. Use products designed for dogs and for your dog's particular breed and coat type. Be sure to rinse all the soap out very thoroughly. Most dogs act crazy when they get out of the bathtub - running around the house, jumping on and off things, rubbing against furniture, etc. This is very normal. I call this behavior the "zoomies"!
- 7. Be sure to regularly examine your pup for fleas and ticks.** If you use a preventive product, make sure to use the ones that are specifically for puppies. To remove a tick, first put some rubbing alcohol on a cotton ball and hold it on the tick for several seconds. This makes the tick loosen its grip. Then use tweezers to firmly grasp and remove the tick. Be sure to get the head out completely. Put a little more alcohol on the spot where the tick was. This sometimes will scab over this is normal. The best way to dispose of the tick is to flush it down the toilet. (Don't forget to examine yourself for ticks, too!)
- 8. Minor cuts and scrapes can be treated with hydrogen peroxide.** If you're in doubt as to how serious a wound is, don't take chances call your vet.

If you start a grooming routine early in your pup's life, she will be comfortable and familiar with it. Continue it regularly and your pup will always look and feel her best.