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Shampoo 101:

Don't be fooled by rich, bubbly lather

By Annette Clark Hiott

Many consumers believe that the basis for proper cleaning while shampooing is directly related to the suds and the amount of "bubbly foam" produced by the foaming agents in the shampoo. The more the shampoo suds

and bubbles, they reason, the cleaner it makes the skin and coat of their dogs.

In actuality, this is not the case. In fact, thick suds can literally choke off the shampoo's cleaning action. Let's look more closely at these bubbles and how they work to clarify how shampoo actually cleans.

THE DIRT ON GETTING CLEAN

Suds are air bubbles charged with electricity that attract water and hold dirt and oil in suspension. The greater the surface area of the bubble, the greater its capacity to draw dirt and oil off the skin.

Despite feeling cleaner, thick suds have lots of tiny bubbles and thus less surface area available to do the job.

In contrast, lower sudsing products create larger bubbles, which are more efficient at removing dirt and oil.

Beware manufacturers that add thickening agents such as sodium to give the illusion of a quality product. Sodium requires extra rinsing and over-dries the skin!

Basic shampoo has three main, active ingredients for cleaning:

- Surfactants loosen dirt from the skin and coat;
- Emulsifiers place the dirt and oil into suspension;
- Water acts as the carrying agent that removes the dirt and oil.

Any other active ingredients treat specific needs for the coat and skin, such as antibacterial agents or skin conditioners.

Annette Clark Hiott has lectured extensively on canine allergies and skin care. She can be reached at 871-3006 or groomerssecret@aol.com.



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