



## Royal Animal Hospital – Hair Shedding

### Shedding Allows Dogs to Prepare Their Coats for a New Season

As the days grow shorter and the nights grow colder, you may be observing what seems rather odd for a body preparing for winter: Your dog is shedding more than usual.

The same thing happens when summer approaches – the winter coat is replaced.

Be reassured: It's perfectly normal.

Dogs typically lose their winter coats in the spring, when it is replaced by a shorter, lighter one for summer. In the fall, this cycle is reversed, as the summer coat is shed to make room for heavy protective fur for winter. The change is most obvious in "double-coated" breeds such as collies, shelties and keeshonden. Those breeds carry not only a harsh, protective long overcoat, but also a soft, insulating undercoat -- and they lose masses of fur from both in spring and fall.

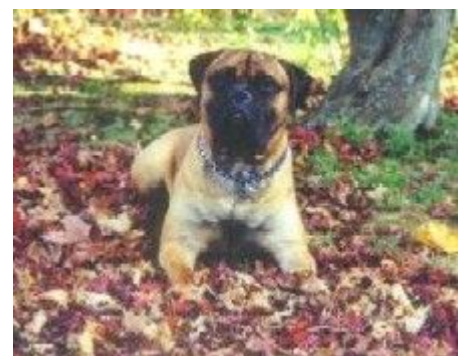
The amount of shedding varies widely from breed to breed. German shepherds, for example, are prolific year-round shedders, while poodles seem to lose little fur at all. Shorthaired breeds may shed as much as the longhairs, but since the hair they shed is easily overlooked, it may seem as if they are shedding less.

All shedders -- even the heaviest -- can be tamed by a regular and frequent schedule of combing and brushing. After all, the fur you catch on a comb won't end up on a rug. Work against the grain and close to the skin to catch as much of the ready-to-fall fur as possible.

If you have a purebred, or a dog that has the characteristics of a purebred, ask a breeder for grooming advice, especially in regard to the proper kind of grooming equipment. The slicker brush that works fine on a poodle won't make much headway in the thick mane of a full-coated collie at the height of a seasonal shed. For a shorthaired dog, a curry comb or hound glove will do the job well, catching the short fur before it ends up on your rug.

***BE WARNED: THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO WILL TRY TO SELL YOU FOODS OR MEDICINES THAT CLAIM TO STOP HAIR SHEDDING. THESE ARE FALSE CLAIMS. THERE IS NO PRODUCT THAT STOPS NORMAL SHEDDING!***

Become familiar with your pet's normal pattern of shedding, and ask your veterinarian for advice if coat condition seems to dull or excessive hair loss is noticed.



No matter what the breed, shedding -- and heavy seasonal shedding -- is normal, but some heavy shedding can be a sign of health problems. Skin allergies and skin parasites may trigger shedding, and poor nutrition can also be a cause of coat problems.