

# A Valley Dog Groomer Offers to Tips for Fluffing Fluffy

By Lori Jo Oswald

At the bottom of the list of things to do in a day. That's how Tony Salomone describes the way most people seem to feel about brushing their dogs. Salomone, owner of the Soapy Dog, a self-service dog wash and full-service grooming shop located on the Palmer-Wasilla Highway, said, "The biggest thing I see here is that people need to keep their dogs brushed."

## Long-haired Breeds

Longer-haired breeds, especially, need good regular brushing, Salomone says, because "once they get matted, they can get skin irritations and infections."



## Veterinarian's Role

Another thing he recommends is that pet owners visit their veterinarians regularly. "I see a lot of things on dogs – lumps and bumps." Sometimes those might be serious, such as tumors. When people groom their own dogs, they would see those problems

themselves earlier on, Salomone said.

## Pet-Human Bonding

Perhaps even more important is the joy of grooming, for both the pet and its owner. "It's just a good bonding thing with your pet, and it keeps him healthy and his coat in good shape."



## A Word About Puppies

Salomone also recommends introducing puppies to as many experiences and noises as possible, including grooming. "The more stuff he's exposed to, the less traumatic it is for him. Get him used to the grooming process early on. Just sit him down and brush him." Puppies used to loud noises and more experiences are more likely to handle them calmly later on.



## Shaving

What about shaving long-haired dogs? Salomone says he gets this request quite frequently in the summer, but he encourages people to have their pets' coats trimmed and brushed instead because the hair insulates and protects their skin from the hot sun. "This is where brushing comes in. Especially in the summer, a ton of undercoat will come out" with a good brushing, he said.

## How Often? Depends

Scheduling a professional grooming every 4 to 16 weeks, depending on the breed of dog you have, is a good idea. Contact a pet groomer for more information.

Copyright Lori Oswald, STOP the Overpopulation of Pets, Inc., PO Box 4083, Palmer, AK 99645. [www.alaskastop.org](http://www.alaskastop.org). Please e-mail us at [petnews@alaska.net](mailto:petnews@alaska.net) for reprint requests.

STOP is a nonprofit corporation dedicated to saving dogs and cats in Alaska by paying for spaying and neutering. Donations are always needed!