



# Shampoo & Your Pet's Skin

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Many owners worry that bathing too frequently can dry out their dog's skin. For dogs with certain skin diseases though, bathing more frequently can actually be helpful and/or may be considered a form of medical treatment. For example, dogs with secondary bacterial or yeast infections may benefit from medicated baths, often with a shampoo that contains an antimicrobial called chlorhexidine. Other dogs with keratinizing disorders, in which the skin is not shed appropriately, lifelong treatment includes bathing (to remove loose layers of dried skin) and conditioning (to rehydrate the skin).

Dog skin has a different pH (acidity level) than human skin, so we often avoid human bathing products. Other ingredients, even if sold specifically for dogs, may be harmful. For example, tea tree oil in high amounts can be toxic, and coconut oil can sometimes makes the skin overly greasy (predisposing to secondary infection). When bathing, it's also important to use undiluted shampoo, in a clean environment, while being gentle to the skin (no harsh scrubbing or toweling); following these guidelines may help avoid an infectious disease called post-grooming furunculosis. If there are any questions about topical therapy for your pet's skin, a veterinary dermatologist can help!

