Coat Care

To have and maintain a good, strong, healthy corded coat there are several things that must come together.... Genetics, nutrition, health of the dog and care given by the owner(s).

There are many types of corded Puli coats...thick and lush, sparse and wispy, wiry, soft, black, gray, white, etc. However, it must be understood that not all Puli coats are created equal. Genetics play a huge part in determining what type of coat a particular dog will have at maturity. However, it is up to the owner to see to it that the dog is kept free of parasites, is fed a well balanced diet, gets plenty of exercise and keeps his dog as clean as possible. Often the best advice comes from the individual breeder. Owners should take advantage of the breeders experience and refer to them any questions regarding coat care or, for that matter, anything else. Some dogs have coats that cord with little or no help. Others needed lots of "help" over many months to achieve the best possible results. The proper mix of outer coat to undercoat will determine how easily the cords form...generally a 50-50 mix is best. I repeat, not all dogs will have the same quality of coat no matter what type of care is given...Again, genes at work!!!

Dogs scratch for all kinds of reasons....fleas, ticks, ear infections, allergies-food or inhaled, debris in the coat, even boredom. To determine the reasons for the scratching, sometimes the owner needs to be a detective. With the many products on the market today to help control fleas and ticks, we are indeed very lucky. It has changed how some of us live with our dogs and, indeed, where we live. With the exception of some allergies, all of the above issues are relatively easy to control. Allergies on the other hand can be elusive. However, with the help of a veterinarian, these to can be controlled or, hopefully, eliminated.

A complete bath and grooming is given when it is needed...period. With the exception of a show Puli, all dogs should be groomed/bathed as it becomes necessary...show dogs may need to be bathed every week. The timing will be different for each dog...from dogs that do herding; run through fields/beaches, etc. to those who live a more sedentary life...the timing will be different. But the routine doesn't change....

A grooming/bathing session should include ear cleaning, nail trimming and teeth cleaning. Using ear powder helps to facilitate the removal of hair in the ear canals. If done on a regular basis, the nails should only need to be tipped and the teeth scaled at home. Of course, your vet can also clean your dog's teeth as necessary.

When bathing a fully corded coat, one must allow time for the bath, the rinsing (which can take longer than the actual bathing) and, of course, drying. Always put the shampoo into lukewarm water first...being sure it is mixed well...then add the dog. (Only use as much shampoo as is absolutely necessary to get the job done. Too much and the suds will be impossible to get rid of.) With a fully corded coat, it can take some time for the cords to get completely wet. As the cords float to the top, keep pushing them down into the water. With the dog lying in the tub, I continually pour the soapy water over the dog... being careful not to get the water in the eyes/ears/mouth...squeezing the coat like one would a sweater. This process can take up to fifteen minutes and may require another repeat washing....

Once you are certain the dog is clean, you can begin the rinsing process. The rinsing is NEVER done until the water coming off of the dog runs clear and is free of any soap bubbles/residue. (Any soap left in the coat when this process is finished will cause many dogs to scratch. It is imperative that the rinsing be thorough!)

After you are certain the dog is soap free, squeeze (don't rub) all of the cords until you are sure that you have gotten all of the excess water removed. The more water you are able to squeeze out the less time will be spent on drying.

Drying a Puli is really easy...just time consuming. If you have a dog dryer, so much the better. In the absence of a commercial dog dryer, keep the dog on towels (changing as necessary) using fan(s) blowing from as many angles as possible. IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THE DOG BE DRIED COMPLETELY. Pulis mildew and smell very offensive if ALL the moist is not gotten out of their coats as soon as possible after bathing.

Once the coat is completely dry, the dog is put on a table and the trimming process is begun. Since each dog/coat is different, the type of trim given will be individual. It is best to trim a dog immediately after bath/drying as the cords do stretch when wet.

Although the above is my routine from years of experience, it is still best to consult your breeder for more detailed instructions.

Carolyn Nusbickel

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As often said, the best way to keep a white Puli’s coat clean is to never let it get dirty. While that may be true, it is totally unrealistic. Besides, a good white coat isn’t much different than a good black coat in as much as it does resist normal non-staining dirt to a high degree. I remember taking my guys herding once. The boys decided to jump into the algae/scum filled pond. I was horrified. I thought I would never get their coats clean. They were green, black sandy and disgusting. However, when the crud dried there was no staining just a lot of sand. What the coat does not resist, and what is often more noticeable in the white coat are stains.

Many stains can be avoided in the white show dog by tying up the cords or wearing shirts and leg and foot coverings. This may not be practical for all of your white Pulis as it does take some time. However, depending upon your white dog’s coat and the circumstances, it may be essential for your show dog. Eye stains can be avoided to a degree, by making sure you clean the eyes everyday. Other than that, there are various products and stain removers you can utilize. I have used peroxide and baking soda on stubborn stains. This works to a degree, but I have found very little that will work on stains that are not attended to in a timely manner. On the day of the show you can try some corn starch to mask any minimal staining.

The most effective way to keep a Puli coat clean is to wash your dogs frequently. Depending upon the coat, it is usually sufficient to wash the dog every ten days or so. In addition, a show dog would be bathed before every show, which could mean every week. I use a baking soda shampoo that I purchase from Pet Edge. I am not aware if other supply companies have the same shampoo. If the dog is particularly dirty, for whatever reason, I soak them first in a bath of soapy water and squeeze the suds through the coat. I then follow up with a pressure wash containing the same soap. I add additional baking soda to each bath. At Susan McDaniel’s suggestion, I made my own pressure washer using a sump pump. I rinse the coat thoroughly after each bath. I then use a conditioner and rinse that out completely. Some owners of Black Puli use an oil on their coats. I have never tried this with a white Puli and frankly would be concerned that dirt would adhere to the coat and cause more trouble than it would solve. Therefore, I only use a conditioner during their baths.

I would never allow my white Pulis to be loose while they are wet after their baths. The wet coat acts like an old string mop. It picks up every inch of dirt over which it runs. When the wet cords soak up dirt in this way, it does not come out easily. Even if you wash the dog immediately, which you would have to do, I do not believe you would get the cords completely cleaned. If the dog is allowed to air dry in this manner, it will be nearly impossible to get the dirt out of the cords with a normal bath regimen. I air dry my dogs in their crates while they lay on white towels until their coats are completely dry or barely damp to the touch. I replace the white towels at least four times during their drying time. It takes about four hours for my fully coated dogs to crate dry. It is really the hardest part of the day since my dryers are quite noisy. If you don’t have a dryer and are thinking about buying one, I strongly urge you to find a quiet one. It will make your life a lot more tolerable on bath day.

Never use bleach on a white coat. It not only dries out the coat, but, turns the coat yellow or green. Some people have told me they use bluing or a bluing shampoo. I remember trying that with my rescued White Puli. The coat was blue every place debris and lint had collected in the cords, which was everywhere. I suppose if you were a meticulous housekeeper and had a lint-free environment, you might be able to use bluing on your dog. I could not and I don’t recommend it for the average dog owner.

Just a word about white Puli puppies. It is essential to keep their coats clean as well. Especially when it starts matting. If there is dirt or stains on the coat when the mats begin forming, it will be integrated into the newly developing cords. So, don’t forget to keep your puppy coat clean. Initially, I use a tearless puppy shampoo, but I switch at about four or five months to the baking soda shampoo sans extra baking soda. I also use a more dilute baking soda shampoo on the soft puppy coat. I condition the coat using a more dilute solution of the conditioner.

Carol Zamperini
Keeping Your Puli Clean Between Baths
More than You Ever Wanted to Know
Up Front and Personal
Dedicated in Memory of Ch. Tordor's Gyorgy DiJ HT, NA, CGC, VP

There are as many ways to keep your Puli clean and tidy between baths as there are pulik and owners. It is a matter of varying importance depending on the owner's goals and preferences, the age of the Puli and type of coat and his/her personality and intelligence. Pulik owners are a hardy bunch for the most part as they need to recognize the quirks and temperament of their individual dog and respond accordingly. Sometimes you find a simple solution and other times it depends on how well the owner outwits his crafty dog. At all times it depends on the owner's determination to figure out a way to avoid giving extra baths by outwitting his extremely clever four-footed partner. I, of course speak from experience, having lived with the wildest and most fun-loving Puli in the west. Everyone probably still remembers my Gyorgy and the various sagas regarding rubber-bands that told the story of our contest for most of his life. Certainly, I am still recalled in at least five different emergency hospitals or internal medicine clinics, and many dog shows venues whenever they see a Puli and an owner coming in. In the end I think it was a draw as to who won our battle. Luckily, many pulik give no trouble at all in allowing themselves to be kept clean.

If you are really intent on keeping your dog clean then you need to study how the dog handles himself inside the home and out, what role your climate and location play in determining the challenges to your environment and how you can respond to it. For example, if your dog drinks water and bathes his face in the bowl soaking it to the point that in a matter of time his muzzle becomes mildewed, you need to change his water bowl to one that minimizes his soaking himself. A Water-Hole is a good choice in this situation. Addressing mildew is important as not only the odor is an issue but some dogs start to rub their faces on any surface to counter the itching the wet skin and coat can produce. This can lead to various skin problems like staph infections or pyoderma.

Using an artificial chamois (Moisture Magnet) to pull excess moisture from the coat helps, and using an anti-bacterial shampoo like Nolvasan prevents a lot of recurrent problems. When bathing the Puli I follow the directions on the bottle to spot clean or pre-wash any debris that gets stuck under his coat. Even the most astute of dogs can be challenged by a simple, yet unexpected obstacle in their path. Sometimes the solution is to buy or make a raincoat. With a waterproof coat, you can slide your dog in and out of public areas and on and off your property with ease.

Keeping the Puli dry in wet conditions is critical for many reasons. For one, a thoroughly soaked dog can easily chill despite his water resistant coat. Another reason is to prevent mildew from developing in various parts of the dog's coat if it isn't thoroughly dried. Mildew can ruin the show image if the dog is foul smelling and can contribute to coat loss and infected skin if not treated. One way to deal with it is to use rain gear to keep him dry. This can be something made by hand using water repellent material if you are handy at sewing or bought from a pet supplies catalog. There are several vendors who sell dog coats on line. Also, putting waterproof booties on the feet in wet, snowy or icy conditions protect the feet from damage and minimize allergic reactions for dogs who are sensitive to molds.

Watching how your dog operates outside when going for a walk to be pottied is important because his personal way of "doing his business" will determine how you protect his coat from the environment and from himself. If your bitch squats low to the ground then you need to be aware of where her coat lands. Also, keeping your dog on a graveled area is helpful in that there is less of an opportunity for urine to sit on the surface and soak the cords. If your male walks outside and decides it's not his problem where or even if he aims, after all, it isn't his job to deal with that, just to do the deed, then you need to pay attention to what he is doing and figure out how to minimize or prevent the urine from washing down the front of his back legs, his underbelly and the back of his front legs. To give him credit, my guy though definitely holding that attitude as his dog-given right, tempered my aggravation by seeking out storm drain grates anywhere he found them no matter how much traffic in parking lots he held up or even bathtubs so as to minimize my work in cleaning up the environment in order for me to keep my mind focused on keeping him clean which was my part of the bargain.

This brings me to the part of this article that deals with the various ways one can specifically keep your Puli clean between baths. If your dog is quite young or short in coat there is nothing much to do besides picking out by hand any debris that gets stuck.
to the coat. If the dog is urinating on parts of his coat I recommend squeezing out the excess fluid, rinsing it out with some soapy antibacterial shampoo and/or clear water and towel drying till most of the moisture is out. This takes little time once you have a routine set up. Not paying attention to accumulated urine or feces will lead to a smelly dog who will permanently own the odor and deliver it to various surfaces of your home and furniture depending on what your living accommodations include. I have been laughed at by many for using Baby-Wipes regularly on Puli butts but no one can say my guys smell. If your Puli has enough coat on him to catch urine and the coat is a couple of inches or so long you can begin the relationship of a lifetime: finding a variety of stretchy bands, coated rubber bands, cut lengths of fleecy fabric, or even veterinary wrap to KEEP YOUR DOG CLEAN BETWEEN BATHS (official Puli mantra). You will be limited only by your own sense of creativity and ability to think outside the box or by the determination of a wily Puli to outwit you as you hone your skills.

Stretchy bands of all sorts are found in many places including drugstores, big-box stores like Target, beauty supply companies and importers of novelty items found both in shops and at flea markets. They come in all sizes and types and you will need to have a variety of them available in all sizes to handle all types, lengths and weights of coat. There are two rules that are absolute: never put a band on a part of a Puli tail that touches any part of the tail structure itself. Never. You can band sections of tail coat but you must not ever include the tail bone or skin. Doing so will lead to serious or even fatal infection and possible loss of the tail due to its becoming infected and losing its blood supply. Rule two: When tying up coats it’s necessary for owners to take on the responsibility to recheck the bunches a couple of times daily to make sure that they are not so tight so as to weaken or break the cords or damage the skin or so loose that the coat is falling out of the band. You just can’t put in the bands and then forget about them.

Bands come in many styles: fabric coated, stretchy fabric, rubber mixtures of materials and metal clamped. Never use rubber or elastic material that is not covered and padded with some sort of fabric to protect the coat from the pressure of the elastic material. Don’t use bands that are too small or that get twisted too tightly around the cords as they can cut into or weaken the cords and create coat loss and/or damage to the skin. Wider bands distribute the pressure over the cords evenly and cause less damage. Worn out bands need to be disposed of promptly. If they fall off or are easily yanked off and eaten it is far more costly to run to the vet than it is to buy a new bag of bands. Trust me, I know whereof I speak. Once you find a type of band you love, stock up on quantities of it as they are not always available and sometimes they go out of style and never show up again. Banding styles and techniques are an opportunity to be creative. Try various ways of tying up your dog to see what works for you.

If you are tying up a bitch you need to tie coat away from both sides of the vulva area. You proceed to tie away sections down the rear legs by tying groupings of cords to the outside portions of the legs and away from the direction of urine flow. Use the appropriate size band that suits the coat. Use small bands for fluffy, short or thin cords; thicker cords require larger bands. When doing this, you divide the coat area involved into pony tails and wrap the band around each accordingly. Check to make sure it isn’t too tight or pulling too much on the coat.

Tying up a dog requires that you know his pattern of urination.

You begin by separating the cords to the outside of the rear legs so they are parallel to the leg itself. Trimming the area around the underbelly near and behind the penis VERY CAREFULLY minimizes problems. Tie the coat on the front legs forward to the front of the legs so there is less surface area that can be sprayed. Coat on the sides of the body should also be tied up and away in appropriate sized ponytails. Corded tails can also get in the way so some people take portions of the tail coat and ponytail it to another portion of the coat to keep it clear. Again, never include any of the tail structure itself in this tie up, just the cords themselves. Tie away any coat between the front legs that hangs down by tying it forward. Keeping coat trimmed carefully at the anus area will keep the dog clean of feces for the most part. By this I don’t mean that you cut a bull’s eye circle or a tunnel! You gotta give the Puli a bit of a break sometimes, since you are already ruining his image!!!

Fleecy bands are created by purchasing lengths of this fabric in assorted colors -- your choice -- and cutting them in four inches or wider strips of about a foot or so in length using them as you would a stretchy band tying up the cord bunches in fabric bows. Some people take a six inches or so wide piece and stitch it into a tube appropriately sized to fit the dog’s neck. They use the tube to protect the neck coat from being frayed by a collar. With the fabric tube in place, the collar sits on top of the tube and is held in place inside the edges, which roll up around the collar. When bathing the dog you need to address the matting of the coat which occurs at the neck by opening up those cords -- a pleasure since
I know little about the uses of vet wrap as I never got into using it myself so I hope other users will speak up on how to effectively use it to keep pulik dry and clean.

Once you have a dog that has enough coat to tie up and you have figured out an effective pattern that keeps him clean and neat most of the time, you are ready to add to the drama and protect your creation. I am now talking about protecting the goods en masse. In my situation, I had a dog with an enormous coat that was very heavy and dense. It wasn’t enough to tie him up, I had to add layers of protection to keep him from flicking off the bands and eating them JUST BECAUSE HE COULD and thought it was a fun contest. I also needed to keep the coat clean while walking him around in general. I started by trying out the T-shirt. You prepare by tying bunches of cords together in convenient groups. You place the T-shirt on the dog over his head putting his front legs into the armholes and pull it up snugly over his back and conveniently in front of the penis area. The point is to trap as much hair into the shirt as is possible and tie it tightly over the back so as to lift it up above the spray zone by twisting it and tying it into a knot. Keeping a Puli in a T-shirt helps keep the coat clean and dry as it acts as a barrier to any dirt the coat comes into contact with inside or outside the home.

If this doesn’t do the job sufficiently then you graduate to OTHER MEANS. Lucky are the owners whose dogs’ coats allow them to be tied over their backs with large stretchies and stay there not ever thinking of flopping over onto one side or the other. Never mind that your dog by now looks like an escapee from a side show. It can and does get worse.

My solution was to have a full doggie suit made. I stuffed all the bundles of cords inside the suit in an orderly fashion, enabling the dog to walk freely. The rear leg sections looked balloon-like as they needed to be full enough to allow me to stuff the clumps of cords into them snugly enough that they stayed in. The front-end also needed to be full, as the dog had lots of coat that had to be trapped in the area in front of the penis. The body of the coat needed to be short enough to accommodate a short backed dog. I used straps or ribbons to tie up the body section so it would stay clear of everything. I looked through catalogs and checked out vendors at shows. I patronized any company offering any type of get up that promised to keep my dog dry and clean. Fabrics had to be thin, water resistant and easily washed and dried. At one point I even tried water repellent sprays on the suit (not the dog). The success of any suit depended on how well it armored the coat from any and all situations.

The point is to find a way that works within the parameters of what and whom you are dealing with. I have seen custom made rain coats, full body suits with belly bands to raise the body of the coat, separate leggings, belly band and snood ensembles as well as custom made fabric bags that combine corded bunches into clumps that tie over the backs of dogs and keep it all in and out of harms way. I was happy to find a way to prevent the ultimate disaster: peeing into the covering so that all the urine was contained within the suit -- truly an awful situation!!

My first dog took nothing but food and sex seriously -- everything else was open to negotiation and had to be amusing to him. I was envious of those who had dogs who were easily kept clean. I remember in particular, a certain gentleman champion Puli I always loved and admired who was never tied up, had a magnificent coat and lifted his leg impossibly high and NEVER got a drop of anything on himself though he once anointed me on the foot.

When all is said and done, these experiences have made it easy for me to deal with any type of coat challenge in my almost twenty years in the breed.

To this day the most outstanding way of tying up a dog that I have ever seen and have never forgotten, and is what got me interested in the great variety of ways creative owners deal with keeping their dogs clean --The All Time Most Creative and Unusual -- way more than anything I have ever seen -- was the year I saw Mary Wakeman at a specialty walking Clouseau around the grounds. He was tied up in layered bunches of cords and each bundle was encased in its own plastic baggy. Barely any part of him was not in its own clear plastic bag. I was fascinated and have never forgotten the way he looked. He was a masterpiece.

I would really like to see an informal contest held each year at the National Specialty where dogs compete and are rated on how cleverly and effectively they are tied up. We could make a poster with photos of the best styles which can be viewed from one year to the next. I will happily provide an appropriately creative trophy to the winner!!

Beverly Zeman
I must start by saying that is an excellent idea and approach to this subject and hopefully will continue for sometime and will cover the subject and all the problems that can occur. An "Agony Aunt Coat Problem" Column. Many will be able to relate their dogs and its problems to those raised in the questions.

My main menu for a Puli Coat Care - is attention to the outside and to the inside of the dog. Good food that suits each individual dog and its needs, and not just one's pocket. Some dogs develop allergies to gluten which can cause several problems and so on. A good diet is of great importance to keeping a dog in good condition combined with correct exercise which keeps good muscle tone and general good health and correct weight. The best flowers grow in good soil, and there's the old saying as well "you have to give to receive" is so true in this case For the outside the coat and overall appearance, correct and regular washing and deep cleaning the coat, conditioning and maintenance, is of vital importance; not just when you feel like it.

When washing the Puli I prefer a large volume of water and that the dog should be submerged in warm water with shampoo to the level of its back if bathed in a standing position; or in a normal bath, train the dog from its early days to lie on its back whilst you support its head of course then the coat is also submerged. I personally prefer the dog to be standing, this allows you to be able to use both hands to wash the cords, the way you would wash a lambs wool sweater, gently squeezing the shampoo and water etc in and out of the coat, the coat tends to float horizontally thus not weighing the dog down with the great weight of water. I use a forty gallon oblong loft tank, not expensive and very strong and light to handle, its fitted with a drainage system (plug and plug hole and flexi drain pipe, it can be stood on a base to your own choice of height most comfortable, or inside a normal bath, so as you have the use of the shower and taps etc, it also can be stored easily.

Having two breeds I have also hydro bath which I stand the tank in and use the reservoir system to drain and to apply the conditioners etc. as the hydro does not have the depth of water I prefer for a fully coated dog. You have to adapt what facilities you have to suit, to get the best results. Over the course of time I have tried different ways, but this is the way I prefer, and the dogs stand resting their heads on the side just the right height. They stand on a slatted plastic base similar to those used in some showers. After washing and rinsing thoroughly apply the conditioner/oil rinse evenly through the coat all over. Squeeze the water out of coat as much as possible, you can then towel dry as much of the excess water as possible; the new micro fibre towels are brilliant they hold a lot of water, they are made as a sports towel too and are larger. Dry in your normal procedure, either cage dryers, or your own cage drying method (fan heaters/halogen heaters -very safe and economical etc), drying cabinet, blast drier (not my personal choice) or table dry with a turbo drier.

Products I use, well we have come a long way from those days many moons ago when we had a very limited choice of products; now it's a different story, I have used DeZyNaDog First Aid Shampoo, a Wheat germ Shampoo, but recently after being recommended and trialling a selection of products from Australia 'Animal House Grooming Products' which can be used in several ways very successfully; twenty-six years of dog showing experience have produced a range eight products, which contain no harsh chemicals/silicones/salts/chlorides/bleaching agents. We liked them so much we now import them ourselves. They leave no residues in the coat which can cause several problems, some silicones and soaps can cause powdering and flaky skin which in turn causes irritation, dullness and drying of the coat.

Of the three shampoos I use Mighty White 'N'Bright on all colours of the Puli's, it highlights the black coats and reduces the weathering in the coats etc. For the conditioning I use the Leave in Lustre - it is excellent, it makes the cords texture good and correct, buoyant and they lay well; it protects the coat from the elements etc. Mixing it with oil e.g. a good body oil or mild baby oil, it gives added protection ideal for in between shows etc, with a good amount of oil make an excellent aid to coping with the Brillo Pad stage in puppies coats, helping the coat splitting stage of the coat development, you can determine the amount of oil you need to suit each dogs requirements. This "Mixture" has been so successful they are now working preparing a product already mixed hopefully ready later this year.

Avril Lacey
"Splitting Cords"

In an attempt to provide content in Puli News that would appeal to all members I started asking as many people as possible what they would like to see. The overwhelming response was "help with coats!". This raised further issues as I know from experience that what works for one Puli may fail dismally with another so I decided to ask several well known members to provide feedback to questions asked by our readers. The response for questions was overwhelming and has left me sufficient content for many future issues and it looks like this may become a regular feature. The responses from the "Panel" was also overwhelming and I cannot thank enough those who agreed and took the time from their busy schedules to contribute! If you wish to ask questions or have comments to make on the following responses please send them to me for inclusion in future issues. I decided that the best way to publish this was to list the questions and then each person's responses—I hope this proves insightful and I have to admit that there are several things I have learnt and will be trying on my own Puls!  

Alex Davis

THE QUESTIONS........

1. My Puli has a coat problem, she is a corded Puli who has lost a lot of her cords - the problem is that she always scratches her coat - I do not know if it is an allergy or what - we changed her food which has helped also had blood work done and nothing has showed up. I cannot figure out if she is allergic to something or its just a habit - she does not have any hot spots etc - is there anything you can spray on the coat - any other suggestions or advice?

2. What is the best way to keep a Puli's ears clean? Should I pull out the hair and if so how?

3. I have had Pulis for thirty years. I didn't see a corded dog for at least fifteen of those years. I am now the proud owner of an eleven month old Puli and am finding that cord is a whole lot more work than brushing ever was. My question is about how to manage the developing cords in their multiple shapes (flat, fat, wispy, etc) and how to deal with areas under the ears and on top of the ear flaps, the developing cords in their multiple shapes (flat, fat, wispy, etc) and how to deal with areas is the best way to approach this?

4. Is there anything I can do? It seems to be weakening at the base of the cords.

5. How often should I bath my Puli? What is the best way to bath a Puli?

6. How should I dry my Puli's Coat?

7. I have no desire to show my Puli, however I like the cords but find it a lot of effort to keep him clean with long cords. I would like to have his cords shortened so he looks like a Puli but without the maintenance I have now. Is this something other owners do?

8. Can dogs within the same litter have different coats? My Puli seems to have a harsh coat compared to her litter mates.

9. I have seen Pulik in Puli News that look wonderful in outline. How do the owners get their dogs looking like this? How should I trim my Puli?

10. Moving to the East coast I find that during the humidity of the summer some of my Puli can smell like damp blankets or mildew. How can I get rid of the smell and how do I prevent it happening in the future?

THE PANEL'S RESPONSES.....

Sherry Gibson

1. Are you sure you are getting her rinsed thoroughly? If any shampoo is left in the coat, it could cause her to itch. You might try putting a tee-shirt on her to keep her from damaging the coat. Also, you can put socks on her hind feet (secure them with VetWrap). Scratching can become a habit. If you can break the itch-scratch-cycle, she might quit scratching.

2. I do pull a little of my dogs' ear hair, but not all of it. The main reason for pulling any is to get the dog used to having it done, just in case it ever becomes necessary to pull it. I don't pull a lot unless the ear gets dirty or smelly. There are ear cleaners available from your vet. I prefer a liquid rinse called Nolva Cleanse if I have to use anything.

3. Ah, the "lumpy mattress" stage. Not to worry, it will get better with age. Just stick with it and one day, it will stay separated.

4. Yes, those areas can be quite sensitive but they do need attention or you will have matted ears, tail and legs. Just be careful. You can use a mat splitter. There is one called an "Oliver" mat splitter available from any pet supply catalog, or you can use one blade of your scissors turned with the sharp edge away from the dog's skin, carefully inserted into the mat, then slice down to the end of the mat. Also, you can use one of those plastic gadgets made for opening packages. They have a razor blade in them and a needle-like plastic prong that you can slip into the mat.

5. I like Plush Puppy products available on line. The company is in Australia, but there are dealers in the US. Just google "Plush Puppy" for their sites. I also like Bio-Groom products. Their Vita-Oil is good for a leave-in rinse.

6. This can be caused by hormonal changes associated with being in season or with having a litter of puppies, if it is a female. The dog is probably scratching, even if you never see them scratch. You can try socks, as explained above.

7. I bathe my Pulis when my nose tells me they need it. Some dogs just naturally stay clean and others are pigs. There is no "one size fits all" rule here. I bathe my Pulis in a raised tub that I had installed just for this purpose. It is a lot easier on the back than kneeling down next to a regular bathtub. If that is impractical, you might be able to use a large laundry sink. In any case, the dog needs to be in a set-up where you can get them completely wet. I like to fill the tub with about 8" of water, add shampoo, and have the dog sit, then lay down in the sudsy water so that the cords float out around them. I can then squeeze the shampoo through the coat and pay special attention to the ends of the cords to get out smells and stains. I use an old toothbrush to work the ends of the cords. After shampooing, I drain the tub, spray the coat to get out as much shampoo as possible, then re-fill the tub with clean water for rinsing. Then I let the dog stand up and drain the tub again, then spray, spray, spray until I'm satisfied that there is NO more shampoo clinging to the cords. It is extremely important that all shampoo is removed. Then I pour on a leave-in rinse, towel dry, and then place the dog in a drying cage. Dry until the coat is no longer damp. This can take 4 to 6 hours, depending on the length and thickness of coat.

8. The easiest way I have found is to invest in a drying cage. I built one by stacking two wire crates. The dog goes in the top crate with the pan removed. This crate has to have a mesh floor with wires close enough together that the dog doesn't get their toes caught. I put a commercial dryer on the side of the cage. I put a strong fan in the bottom crate, tilted up so that it blows straight up into the top crate. You can attach the commercial dryer to the bottom crate instead of the top one, so that the hot air from the dryer blows out over the fan and the fan forces the warm air upward, or you can use two dryers, one on each crate. Be sure to check on the dog often so that they don't overheat.

9. Yes, I recommend to all my pet buyers that
they keep the dog in short cords for ease of maintenance, unless they just really want a full length coat. If you have trained your dog to lay on his side on the table, it is quite easy to shorten the cords. I use a strip of cardboard cut to the width of the desired cord length. That is, if you want four inch cords, cut a strip of cardboard four inches wide and as long as your Puli's back from neck to tail. I part the coat down the middle and lay the dog on his side. I lay the strip of cardboard along the length of his back with the edge in his part. I then flip the first layer of cords up across the cardboard and cut off the ends along the edge of the cardboard. Then I place the cardboard in the new part and flip up the next layer of cords and trim them off even with the cardboard. I proceed down the dog's body from his topline to his elbow, layer by layer, trimming each layer even with the cardboard. When I'm through, I have a coat that is composed of four inch cords from top to bottom. Then I do the other side. Then, with the dog standing, I shorten the neck and leg cords and blend it all together. This can be done is several sessions, because the dog will get tired of laying still.

10. I've had Puls for over 30 years and I've never seen two coats exactly alike. Each coat is unique and the texture will vary, as well as the size and shape of the cords.

Avril Lacey

My answers to the raised questions-

Q1-If the dog has been cleared by the vet as not having a medical problem eg. thyroid/hormonal etc. Another problem which can be very deep seated and causes skin and coat problems can be if the dog has been on ground where foxes are around on a regular basis; dogs can pick up a horrible mange. In this case, the dog will have a very bad ear problem, no matter what tried, nothing will work. If the mange is severe case packing the ear; over thirty years ago I had a dog with a very bad ear problem; no matter what tried, the mange was there. Nothing could clear it up, the vet wanted to drill a hole to allow it to drain, I heard about Thornit as a last chance I packed her ear full, it worked and she was better and was kept clear by its very regular use, and several other breeds with the same type ofply formed ear have been saved from operations by its use.

Q3/4 - The first 18-24 months of a Puli's coat development can be horror stories and nightmares all rolled into one, you are not alone; some sail through and the coat is easy to manage, but certainly not all Pulis from the same litter can have different coat patterns and development stages, one can have pencil cords and one can have thicker cords and then there is the chunky ribbon cords; you must not split the cords unnaturally thin to emulate the pencil cords as they develop and grow from puppy to adult they fine down at the root once over puppy coat growth stage, if split to thin will become weak and drop out, that's why sometimes cords appear to be thicker at the ends (puppy wedges) as the puppy has had a very heavy puppy coat. Pulis cords can be naturally slightly thicker on the on pressure parts where they lay and can be finer cords on their legs, they design their own coat pattern; but at the end of the day its constant and diligent work through the 'Brillo Pad' stage, but the final result can be so rewarding.

The way I personally deal with a young puppy's coat is from 6-16 weeks of age, back brush gently with stiff or pin brush from the toes up to the nose everyday.- then leave it to develop into it cords naturally checking every day to ensure the cords are forming as even as possible. With very profuse coats, life can be maniac, they can be damped down so to speak, there are several products which will help at this stage, e.g. -Shaws coat oil/Sea Breeze Oil/ Lanolin and the Animal House Leave in Lustre (with the extra oil in it, add to suit coat) these all have a damping down effect which makes the coat more manageable, make sure you hit target spots, where the problems can occur e.g.- ear leathers and under the ears/neck/forelegs/ behind elbows/inside of hocks/under the tail on its back as the wag their tails so much it rubs up well there, also the tail itself. Just bat regularly and replace the oils etc. It can be easier to do when dog is just out of the bath and still wet, the coat is very supple, and as long as the room is warm, you can work and split the cords to the skin, twirling the cord around your finger as you go through the coat (like you did as a kid with your own hair in class when bored!!!).

With the ear leathers, great care has to be taken and patience, peel the cords back like you would a banana, starting at the centre of the widest part of the ear next to the head, working from centre to the right of ear and then centre to the left of ear working forwards to the tip of the ear; taking great care on the edges not to split the skin, but don't panic if you do (we have all done it) dab with anti-septic and calm yourself and comfort the dog!! they soon heal. Under the ear at the side of head also need a lot of attention.

The tail is another great priority, again peel that as a banana again from the base to the tip, splitting to the skin, none of this half way business, and must be done very regular here, I have seen some dreadful results of not doing this properly.

Then having to take scissors to split the coat open ( up the inside of tail from base to tip very carefully, reveals slimy dead skin, sores / dandruff in wedges, etc etc, not a pretty sight or smell) not healthy especially in that area. Where the coat develops a 'solid mat' just be patient and work carefully dividing the coat evenly following its natural pattern and splitting to the skin, if not it tightens and causes irritation and encourages the chewing habits. There are mat splitters on the market but I prefer finger patience and a pair of latex gloves when a good grip is needed. After every session run your fingers through the coat like a comb several times you will be amazed how much excess undercut you can collect; this combing effect is good on a regular basis stimulates the skin and removes any debris etc.

Q5- There are so many products available today, it depends what suits your dog the best, trial and error. I like the AH range

Three shampoo/two conditioner/Two finishing
sprays, you can mix and match to suit each individual dog and create each dogs own menu. Made by dog show people in Oz who know what we expect from products to suit the very warm and cold conditions.

Q6- Again this could be a medical problem (glandular/hormonal if a bitch) or a skin irritation causing the dog to rub itself against walls and furniture, and scratching itself to relieve the irritation which can be very stressful for the dog. As previously written check the food/diet (malate free) and ensure washed in products with no harsh salts and chemicals or silicones. Also the bedding if washed in Biological powder; There also other allergies, that would be a process of elimination – carpet/plants/household sprays etc.

Q 7- I advise that Puli's are bathed for every show, not a very good experience as a judge to go over a smelly dog I can assure you!!! Regular bathing is most desired, at least every three weeks in between baths; my own around every 18-20 days depends on each individual dogs, there are those that are walking pads of blotting paper and there are those who won't put a foot in anything, fussy and very particular. The girls petticoats are washed in between baths as are the boy's underpants for hygiene purposes at least every week. The white ones feet and faces and pants never seem to be out of the wash bowl.

Q 8- Drying of the Puli depends on your facilities and what you can afford; again there are several products on the market e.g. cage dryers, drying cabinets (two sizes) blasters, and turbo stand dryers etc. You can put a metal crate on the grooming tables with absorbent blankets and vet beds etc in layers at the bottom, in goes the dog and turn on the blow dryer which must be placed at least four feet from the cage and move it around the dog so as to dry from all sides DO NOT cover the cage with anything this reduces air flow and is dangerous never leave on for more than two hours at a time. You can stand the dog on grooming table and dry with the turbo blow dryer, or blast the excess water out and then dry with blow dryer (my concern with this is the removing of the much undercoat and weakening the coat).

A cage on the floor with the towels etc. together with a thermostatic fan heater blowing at a sensible distance again no covering the crate, this proves very successful with a lot of companion owners, keep removing wet towels etc and replacing with dry ones and moving the fan heater around the cage. There are also very good cage dryers, again do not cover the cage.

Another idea and that works well is to put the cages on the floor with halogen heaters same principle as they used to use in hair dressers some time ago, they are very economical and safe, again as long as safe distance from cage which is not covered, and as they can rotate you can do two dogs at once, and can be left for a longer period of time sensibly of course, at a safe distance these heaters don't over heat the dogs either; again this method has worked very successfully in companion homes, I do use this method on dogs who have got slightly damp in the rain etc or I have just washed their petticoats and pants etc.

Q 9- Many owners keep their dogs either the Companion owners or the retired Show dogs in a puppy/junior clip, enough to see the natural cords and to still be attractive, length either way to suit own personal preference, this is easily maintained and dries quickly. Many also clip the coats very short leaving the ears and tail feathering. Choice is yours for the dogs age and comfort and your own convenience.

Q -10 Yes puppies from the same litter can all vary in type of coat patterns immensely, grey/ white and black can all have different textures, and all have individual coat patterns, so can be very interesting to compare and watch their development to the finished result.

Q 11- Well hopefully they have equally the wonderful construction underneath as the outward appearance. This presentation is achieved by very careful coat management and a good eye for balance (not cutting one side shorter than the other) over enthusiastic clipping can ruin a dogs whole appearance. Presentation is of great importance, practice on a dog that doesn't go to shows, so if you make a blunder it does not matter, BUT remember what you did do so as not to repeat again; and the coat will always grow again -but slowly!!!. Do not rush at the dog with the scissors study carefully and imagine- if I take that of there - what will it look like?? Having a good eye for balance etc is of great importance.

Q 12- I would suggest very regular baths using a product like the Leave In Lustre with a little oil to coat wrap it so as to protect from the penetration of the damp and humidity; put the coat into several small bunches at least 10 side with the soft elasticated hair bands, this is to give good air circulation around the coat and body. Care with bedding and the type of dog bed you use, not a solid plastic dog bed, a nylon or a wooden sofa style bed; So that airflow is enabled to get into the bed. For bedding I would suggest putting a pet bed single layer into two cotton pillow case inside each other (cotton is cool), under this pillow put a thick towel which must be changed every morning and may be every evening depending how damp it gets, you will be amazed how much moisture is drawn through this 'sandwich', I use this method a lot.

Well Puli folks I hope this does help you with your questions, and together with fellow writers a lot of your problems will be solved.

If you have any problems sourcing any products contact Alex or myself. Looking forward to next set of questions. Cheers and good luck

Avril Lacey

Beverly Zeman

#1. and #6. Some Pulik scratch as a matter of habit or if stressed; some have fleas or other parasitic problems or allergies. You need to rule these and other factors including products you use on the dog and on the bedding when washing it. The floor covering in the house, if carpet, can be a problem either due to the fabric itself or the cleaning products used. Using fabric softener strips in the dryer or other refreshing sprays in the house or on furniture can cause problems. I would use a hypoallergenic dog shampoo and a lot of rinsing to make sure all residue is removed using a flea and tick product like Frontline on a regular basis every eight hours to help break the cycle of scratching if it is severe. I would use the smallest amount necessary. I would confine the dog to a tile or wood area that is easily cleaned with mild unscented products to see if there is any improvement. I would watch carefully to see if there is a connection between going outside on grass or into woody/leafy/muddy areas to see if contact affects the dog's condition. Does the time of year, dry or wet, humid or dry air, make a difference? Are you using a flea and tick product like Frontline on a regular monthly basis year round despite living in an area that freezes hard for a few months of the year? After all, people coming to dog shows from other areas can bring fleas with them. Are you keeping the coat opened to the base of each cord so it cannot tighten up? Are you consistent in what you feed her including table scraps, treats, etc.? Cords that are thinning at the base may be doing so from scratching or due to their being initially too thin. You might let some of the thinner ones grow together to strengthen them. You can also trim them a bit to take the weight of them in hopes they won't break off. Giving a dog more exercise and giving her/him challenging toys or activities can help if there is a psychological element to their behavior.

#2. I use an ear cleaner such as Pet-Otic for dogs purchased from a pet supply catalog when cleaning my dog's ears. I only clean and pluck when it seems to need it. I hand pluck a few hairs at a time until the ears are relatively free
of hair. Lay the dog down on a grooming table on his side and make sure he is comfortable with your putting him in this position; lift the ear flap and begin by removing some hair by grasping it between your thumb and forefinger, pulling gently and steadily. If you have not done this before you need to approach it slowly and only remove tiny amounts at a time. It might take a few tries to complete. After plucking the hair, I squirt the cleaner in the ear, massage it into the canal and using cotton swabs only, wipe out the excess moisture and any dirt or debris. I usually add a couple of drops of Panalog ointment into the ear and massage it about to soothe any irritation caused by plucking. I have found doing this to be effective and I rarely have had any ear infections following this procedure.

5. Coat products for pulik vary according to what works well for the dog's coat. In general, a low sudsing dog shampoo that rinses out easily is good for a Puli. It is critical to remove the soap residue. A conditioning rinse with some sort of oil like Avon Original bath oil or Keri Oil added to it is helpful. If it is a puppy coat or brushed I would lightly rinse it, otherwise I would leave it in for a corded coat. Hypoallergenic products, shampoo and conditioner are helpful if the dog seems sensitive. I found that shampoo with strong additives like d-limonene made my dog very itchy. Plush Puppy makes a nice line of products that many Puli people are happy with. Traleigh Lavender White shampoo and Traleigh Velvet Touch conditioner (plus oil added into it) are also excellent mild products. Some people do well with Oster products. In short, there is no perfect product out there suitable for all. Try something recommended by experienced Puli people and see how it works for your dog. If nothing works due to skin irritation or coat condition, then consider seeing a vet or a specialist if a skin/coat problem develops. Once you have a product that works well for you, don't worry about all the others out there unless you feel a need to try something new.

9. Many of us shorten the cords on our pulik if they are not being shown in conformation classes. It is a nice way to have the look and feel of a traditional Puli coat without the upkeep involved in full length coats. Pick a cord length that you like and trim the cords to match. It might take a bath or two to get the shortened cords to lie properly. Follow the general shape and structure of the dog as you shorten the coat. It takes a bit of experimentation until you figure out what you like. You might see if an experienced Puli person near by would be willing to help you get started by showing you how to do it.

12. To remove the mildew odor from a coat it is necessary to wash the coat with an antibacterial dog shampoo such as Nolvasan Medicated Shampoo. Follow the directions on the bottle and wait the suggested time before rinsing. You may have to repeat the procedure in areas that still smell such as under the ears, neck, armpits, genitals, etc. Finish your bath as usual if you generally use a particular shampoo and conditioner. Remove as much moisture from the coat as is possible. Use an artificial chamois (Moisture Magnet) suitable for use on animals to squeeze out as much moisture as you can. Do not scrub/rub.

When no more moisture comes out, place your Puli on a folded towel in a wire drying crate containing an additional fine grate (so his feet can't get caught). Elevate the crate in a secure frame of some sort if possible and place powerful fans (I use Patton fans) on as many sides as you can include beneath the crate. Secure the fans with bungee cords so they can't tip/move. Dry the dog, changing the towel periodically until it is no longer moist or needed. Continue drying the dog in the crate, using the fans until he is bone dry. This can be many hours depending on the density and length of coat. It is essential in hot humid climates to make sure the dog is kept physically comfortable while drying. You need to check on him regularly as the room can heat up from the added moisture. The heat generated by the fan motors can also affect the temperature usually maintained in the room itself.

To keep the dog mildew free, keep him dry between baths and keep him in a clean dry area with dry and fresh bedding. If he gets mildewed in only a couple of areas you can spot treat those areas with the shampoo, rinse and dry them thoroughly. After the dog is dry, wait a bit and recheck to see if the coat is really fully dry. If your home is humid in general and air conditioning doesn't keep it dry enough you might consider trying a dehumidifier in the room where the dog spends a lot of time. Some dogs also like to lie down on cool tile and some prefer raised beds that have breathable mesh bases. In general, keeping good air circulation and dry surroundings will mitigate the problem once you get it under control in the coat. In some instances, until the affected coat areas grow out and get trimmed off you will have to be vigilant in re-treating mildew any time the dog gets wet.

Stephanie Horan

1. Coat scratching often starts off as a real problem, such as fleas or some other irritant, and when that problem is solved, the scratching continues as a habit that is hard to break. The wearing of a T-shirt (front legs through the armholes) can sometimes break that habit for long enough that she will forget to scratch when you leave the T-shirt off. It's worth a try.

Food allergies are usually the reason for persistent scratching when fleas and the like have been eliminated as the cause. Changing foods is a long-term solution – try another brand for at least 3 months before concluding that it's not helping. Desperate owners have resorted to having the dog on an extremely bland diet for a few weeks, and when the scratching has stopped, gradually add a new ingredient one at a time and see when the scratching re-starts. You will then know what is causing the irritation and can avoid it as a dog food ingredient. Books on canine diets can help you plan this.

2. The hair should be removed, but I'm not a fan of pulling out all the hair on a frequent basis, I think that can lead to sore and inflamed ears prone to infections. I carefully snip out excess hair with a pair of small blunt-ended scissors, and then with my fingers I pluck out any few stray hairs that are left. It can help if you dip your fingers into an ear powder before you pull out the hair so that your fingers don't slip. Using a hemostat (forceps, or hair puller) can also work if you prefer not to get your fingers in there. I have seen awful Puli ears with literally a cord of matted stinky hair hanging out.

3. An 11-month-old Puli is at the dreaded giant fuzzball stage. My advice is to keep on working at the coat on a regular basis. Don't worry about whether the cords are flat or fat or thin, go with their natural divisions and formations. As you complete a section spray the newly split cords with a diluted coat conditioner, or even plain water – this will help the cords stay separated. At 11 months old you are looking at several more months of coat work with him, and time and patience are of the essence here – your Puli's coat will eventually stay in the cord stage; but he is at an age where many owners despair of it ever looking like a real corded coat. Once in mature cords the work will be much less than brushing ever was.

4. Scissors! The Puli groomer's best friend, in my opinion. If the mats are tenacious and hard to tear without hurting you and the dog, find a natural cord division, if there is one, or decide where you want a cord division to be, and carefully snip into it to create cords and to start off the tearing. If it a very tenacious mat, try using the scissors or close to the skin and snip upwards, away from the skin, and tear from there. Some owners like to use mat splitters for this; others find them awkward and are more comfortable with scissors. There will be some coat loss, but I think that's a minor price to pay for not hurting the dog and your own hands. If the dog suffers discomfort or even pain when being groomed, he will hate being groomed and you will face a battle every time he needs attention to his coat.

The technique for matted ear flaps is to slide the scissors carefully down the ear, cutting the mat
into cords as you go. You will make arbitrary cords as you cut that will not look aesthetically pleasing at first, but with some care and few baths they will settle down and look quite normal.

5. It does, and it also depends on your climate and what you think your Pulli’s coat needs. There are so many products available now it’s really a case of trying out a few and seeing if you like the result. Most owners use some kind of conditioner after a bath, either the kind that is rinsed out or the leave-in type. It is hard to recommend any without knowing the age of your dog, his present coat condition, and what kind of climate you live in — humid or dry.

6. This is a difficult one to solve. Is he scratching or rubbing it out? Trying changing foods as recommended in the answer to #1. If this is a bitch, there may be hormonal changes associated with coming into season, or after having a litter, that is affecting coat growth.

7. Bath whenever you feel the dog is dirty. This might be as often as once a month or even more often for a dog that is being campaigned at shows, or it might be only two or three times a year if you have a Pulli that stays fairly clean and sweet-smelling.

There are two main ways of bathing a Puli, spraying and immersion. Spraying involves putting the dog into a regular bath tub or laundry tub and spraying water on the coat, then applying shampoo, squeezing it through the coat, and then rinsing. The immersion method has the dog in a laundry tub and filling it up with the water level almost up to his head to really soak the coat before shampooing. There are power washing systems that use very little water to apply water and shampoo at the same time. Make sure the ears are dry after bathing.

A Puli can be air-dried in a crate on lots of newspapers and towels that are changed frequently, or a dog dryer set on low heat will speed up the drying process for a dog in full coat. Getting the dog completely dry is important, especially in humid climates, to avoid mildew growth and that musty smell.

8. Yes, they do. Performance dogs in agility and obedience often have their cords shortened so that they do not hit the jumps. Older dogs can also benefit from a shortened coat so that they are more comfortable and not carrying around too much weight on their aging bones.

9. Yes, they can. Pulli coats can vary considerably, from thin cords to fat cords, from flat ribbon-type cords to loosely woven cords. Some coats can be quite dense, needing a lot of work to look wonderful, and others can be the less-dense self-cording kind that is hardly any work but is not as spectacular. They can grow fast and reach the ground by the age of three, or so slow-growing that they never do get genuinely floor-length. In the black Pulli the colour can range from practically jet black to a coat so heavily bronzed the dog almost looks brown. They can all occur within the same litter.

10. This question begs for pictures, videos and hands-on demonstrations! A very short answer in words only would be as follows. The cords on the front of the dog should be trimmed to give a layered line from the chin down the feet. To give the impression of a round head rather than a long muzzled heavy head, trim cords back that hang past the end of the nose, and shorten some of the ear cords and those at the sides of the head. Go easy with the head trimming however — there are many Pulli’s out there whose heads can best be described as “lollipops,” looking as if they don’t really belong to the dog at all and have just been stuck on as an afterthought. Layer the trimming into the neck to avoid this look.

All long cords should be cut so that they do not touch the ground. Separate the cords on the topline so that it hangs evenly from a straight parting down the spine. Trim around the feet to give a neat round look to the foot. Trim any odd bits of hair or lumps of coat that occasionally form along the length of the cords to neaten the overall look. On the adolescent Pulli cords often have long curly ends or tufts — trimming them off will give a neater look though some people prefer to leave them to give the illusion of a longer coat. When trimming the ends of cords, don’t cut straight across, round off your trimming to give a more natural look to the ends.

Check your Pulli’s profile to be sure that no cords are hanging longer than their fellows, or are sticking out at awkward angles. Trim them, or smooth them into the rest of the coat with mousse or coat conditioner.

11. Living in a climate which is very dry most of the time, I don’t have much advice to offer on this question except to ensure that the dog is thoroughly dry after bathing by using a dog dryer, but I can appreciate that a humid climate will tend to keep the dog slightly damp all the time. Try using a pleasant-smelling leave-in conditioner after bathing. There are sprays that are designed for use in between baths when your dog smells less than pleasant. Experiment with some of these to see what works.

Anita Formati & Carol Zamperini

1. This is a tough question. I would have my dog’s thyroid levels checked. Otherwise, I would suggest you make sure your dog gets oil in his food or is given vitamin E and fish oil tablets with his meals. In addition, depending upon where the dog scratches, you could try wearing a toddlers shirt on him/her if s/he is scratching in the front area. If the dog is chewing his coat, try some bitter apple spray.

2. I always pulled out the hair in my Pulli’s ears. However, recently I had an appointment with the dermatology department at CSU. The doctor said not to pull the hair out of the ears because it only causes an irritation, unless of course the abundance of hair is causing problems. Make sure the ears are dry after bathing.

3. Start separating the mats as they form and keep at it. Make sure you do not separate the mat into sections that are too small. As the cords develop the base will often get smaller and smaller and become too thin at the base. However, you may not want to try to do too much separating of mats at one time. The dog may get bored and restless. Put him/her on your lap while you are watching television and do one leg at a time or one section of the shoulders. It is sometimes helpful to spray the separated cords with water to help them form and keep them separated. After you have worked on an area for a while, let the dog play or better yet play with him and make it a reward for his/her patience. Some people are good separating tails and ears and some dogs do not seem to mind as much. I always like to have someone help when I am separating the ears and tail. In the ears especially, it helps to have someone keep track of the ear leather so that you do not tear it while separating the mats. The ears and tail are separated starting at the base. You can pull an area of mat backwards and then separate them into the desired size. Again, do not separate the mat into too thin of a section. Another idea on separating cords, anywhere, is to do some of it when they are in the tub soaking. I use a laundry tub to wash my dogs, so the dog is somewhat contained. I have found I can separate problem areas a lot easier when they are in the tub and wet.

4. These are two areas where I like to have someone help. In both cases, you separate from the base of the ear or tail in layers and then separate into cords. If you are doing it by yourself, I have found it easier to do in the laundry tub while I am bathing them. What ever you do, do not make the cords too small especially on the ears.

5. I use baking soda shampoo and Tauriage conditioner. But I think it’s a personal preference.
6. Have the dog's thyroid levels tested. If ok, I would change shampoo and conditioner. Also, I think a rolled leather collar is easier on the coat. If the dog is scratching the coat, I would try putting oil into his food, I use vitamin E and Fish Oil. I would also make sure the coat is separated in that area. If there is matting and it is pulling the skin the dog may be scratching it out. In addition, if the cords were made too small when they were separated and the cords tighten as they get longer, they will be thin at the base and more easily pulled out. This varies with the coat consistency of every dog.

7. I think you should bathe your Puli when it needs it, in other words when it is dirty. I try to bathe my dogs every two weeks unless the dog needs it more frequently. A show dog of course is bathed before every show weekend.

8. I use both towel drying and an air dryer (with warm air) simultaneously while they are drying. We change the towels under the dog very often in the first hour.

9. There are many owners who shorten the cords on their older dogs and/or non-show dogs. Some will cut each cord the same length. This is a nice look and helps keep the cords from getting as dirty. Of course, tying up the cords and wearing shirts on the dogs helps regardless of coat length.

10. Yes indeed the coats can be different in litter mates.

11. Show dogs that are pictured in Puli News have been trimmed to look sculptured. This does take some skill and practice. Some have a talent for grooming, others have learned from experience. When you are around a Puli owner whose dog is trimmed the way you would like to trim, ask them to show you how they trim. Most Puli owners are willing to share their experience and give you some pointers.

12. This usually happens because the cords around the mouth get wet every time the Puli drinks. You may try washing and drying that area more frequently. Also, use baking soda in your bath water or baking soda shampoo. In addition, when in a humid climate, I would make sure my dog is completely dry after each bath. I would towel dry, changing the towels frequently, while I am drying my dog in a crate with an air dryer.

Submitted by Anita Formati & Carol Zamperini

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**ANNA QUIGLEY & PATRICIA TURNER**

1. We often will put the Puli in oil to stop the itch cycle that can be caused by any inhaled pollen. It will not always work but worth a try. It is also sometimes very hard to stop the itch cycle and on occasion your vet may suggest antibiotics. We also have used antihistamines.

2. What is the best way to keep a Puli's ears clean? Should I pull out the hair and if so how? We pull the hair out of the ears. We also use a ear wash regularly to help keep them clean and to keep the bacteria down.

3. Do not panic, they can mat over night. Just keep working with the coat and remember you can always make the cords smaller so don't make them too small to begin with.

4. They need to be split just be very careful. I think the softer the hair is the more it goes together. As the adult coat comes in it will remain corded

5. We love using the Plush Puppy products and also use Skin so soft as an after bath rinse. We use the more expensive flea preventive products.

6. The first thing we do is eliminate the chance of fleas. The reason you see the damage around the neck and shoulders is because they are itching with their back feet. Keep the toenails down to help prevent damage.

7. We do not bath all that often unless we are showing the dog. It is not the bath that causes problems it is the drying. We use a good shampoo and dilute it even more than the instructions call for. Most important is getting the soap out.

8. We use blowers. If you live in a dry climate you can use fans as well as a dryer. We change the towels on the dog very often in the first hour. It will draw the water out of the coat.

9. Lots of folks do.

10. Yes, more often than not.

11. We try to look at the whole dog and not at individual cords. Have an idea before you start at what look you are trying to get and then work slow to achieve it.

12. I do not know the answer to this except maybe to be sure to get the dogs very clean when bathing them. We do not have much humidity.

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**Caring for a Puli during Chemotherapy**

Our eleven year old Puli pet Dandy was diagnosed with cancer in June of 2006. She has surgery and we were asked if we wanted to consider chemotherapy. The doctor said that there would be five treatments given in three week intervals. The dog might be a toy for a day or two but otherwise fine. What the doctor did not know was that Puli unlike most dogs, lose their fur on chemo.

We proceeded with the treatments and watched her fur fall out. Our groomer came and gave her a soothing bath and removed the fur that remained so she would be even all over. She has a wardrobe of shirts (the polo is her favorite) and she also sports a baseball cap made for dogs. We keep our walks to shady spots.

We never thought we would go to such extremes to save a pet, but with Dandy we did not hesitate.

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Barbara Ryden