

How hair, skin and the sebum layer protect our pets.

The relationship among the skin, hair and sebum is a fascinating example of biological interdependence, contributing to the overall health and functionality of the body. By this column, I hope to bring some understanding of this significant symbiotic relationship so that pet owners would think thrice the next time they go to their dog groomers and ask for shave down of their dog's hair. Or wonder why your dog is scratching?

The answers to some of the following questions may probably answer that question. Does your pup have a primary health condition, hence a compromised immune system? What do you or your pet groomer use to groom your pet? Do you use a conditioner after shampooing your dog? When your vet prescribes or recommends a strong medicated shampoo but without a hydrating conditioner, consider the effect of the product on the pet's skin. The after feeling on your own hands would probably be a good indicator of the effect on the pet's skin.

Dog's skin is like a trusty suit of amour for our canine companions, safeguarding them against elements and external threats. The skin is the largest organ of the body and is a physical barrier, protecting the dog from dirt, germs and harmful substances. It protects their internal tissues from injuries, scratches or abrasions. The barrier works both ways: it keeps bad things from getting into our body and keeps good things in. Skin is a frontline defender in the dog's immune system.

Healthy skin is crucial to a dog's overall well-being. Many people think that nutrition controls all skin conditions. Nutrition plays a big role but is not the only thing that affects skin health. The nutrients in the conditioners we use bathing a dog affects the skin much more rapidly than what we feed them.

A dog's hair acts as a protective barrier against environmental toxins and irritants. Hair is a physical barrier that prevents direct contact between the skin and harmful substances. Essentially, hair is the first line of defense shielding the dog against allergens before they reach the skin and minimizing allergic reactions or irritations. Hair protects the pet's skin from harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays which can cause burns and skin damage over time.

Maintaining healthy hair can have a positive impact on skin health due to the interconnected relationship between the two.

Sebum is the protective layer of the skin, vital as a natural defense mechanism in keeping the skin healthy and protected. It is made up of fatty acids and oils produced by sebaceous glands in the skin. It coats and protects both hair and skin. The sebaceous gland in the skin is associated with the hair follicle itself. As the hair moves, the sebum moves up the hair shaft and over the skin. Sebum is not only a water-resistant barrier it is also antibacterial and antifungal. In essence, sebum nourishes and protects both the skin and hair, while the skin and hair optimize the function of sebaceous glands. This delicate balance is essential for maintaining healthy, resilient skin and hair.

Understanding the interdependence relationship of the pet's skin, hair and sebum layer is important. Share this information with your friends and family if they missed this column, it will provide insight to some of the skin problems their pet may be experiencing.

