

ASK OUR VETERINARIANS

Dear Dr. Schmidt,

I've had several different breeds of dogs over the years. Why do some dogs seem to shed more than others?

Thank you,

Cyndi

Dear Cyndi,

First of all, there are three basic kinds of hair on dogs: tactile hair, an undercoat and an outer coat. The tactile hairs are their whiskers and the facial hairs that help them pick up sensory signals, especially when they hunt or prowl at night. The undercoat is made of dense soft fur that helps to insulate them and also provides support for the outer coat. The outer coat is made up of long stiff guard hairs that help to protect the outer coat. Breeds like Huskies, Poms, and Newfies are the heaviest shedders because they have well-developed double coats. They can shed their undercoats twice a year and their outer coat once a year. Most shedding is triggered by hormonal changes dictated

by the length of the day, but some dogs that are kept inside a lot and are exposed to differing amounts of artificial light may shed all year round. Some breeds that lack double coats may also shed year round. Conditions of extreme stress like whelping, illness, poor nutrition, etc., can cause a sudden major loss of hair at once. And of course we can't forget breeds like Poodles and some terriers that don't shed at all. So you can see that there are many reasons that can determine how much a dog sheds. Glad to see that you have enjoyed many different types of dogs.

Have a furry nice day,

Dr. Doug



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