

Winter, 2004

Dear Miss **Fido Manners**

Keeping Up Appearances

By Charlotte Reed

I travel throughout the world with my owner. As a result, I am always worried about my appearance. What is the best way to maintain my appearance when away from home?

A Very Royal English Toy Spaniel



Dear Charlie:

Keeping up your appearance is a prerequisite if you are a pooch on the go. Darling, forgetting your personal appearance tells the world a lot about you and your Mistress. In fact, your appearance is what makes the first real impression when you walk or are carried in your tiny case into a room.

What matters most is how well you are groomed. Grooming refers to the way in which your body is cared for and maintained. Your fur should always be clean and well cut. If you are neat, clean and pleasant smelling, it reflects not only your owner's sense of self-worth and self-esteem, but also her awareness of those around you. Good grooming and proper hygiene are a must for every dog and not just a King or a Prince, such as you.

When far from a professional coiffeur, your owner must take on the job of making

you look and feel your best, even in a hotel suite. She must clean your face on a daily basis. Breeds like yours, with facial skin folds, need to have a moistened cotton ball used to clean their entire face. A gentle cleaning can prevent dirt, dead skin and bacteria from collecting in the folds and causing irritation, infection and odor.

Next, your ears must be cleaned, too! Your Mistress can either use an ear wipe or moisten a cotton ball with hydrogen peroxide and gently swab the inside flaps. She should use a fresh piece for each ear and never probe too deeply inside the ear canal.

If necessary, your Mistress might have to become your manicurist. Cleaning the dirt and debris (again with a moistened cotton ball) from between dog toes is far easier than clipping nails. When trimming dog nails, use canine nail clippers and take care to trim the nails without cutting the quick, which is the blood supply and nerves. If ever in doubt, have her ask your veterinarian or groomer.

But to make you look presentable in a relatively short amount of time, a brush and a comb is the easiest way. Try brightly colored ConairPet grooming tools, which cost approximately \$3.50 each (www.conairpet.com). Use a pin brush if you are a dog in full show coat or a soft slicker if you are a puppy with a smoother coat. Keep in mind that good brushing should always be followed by combing to remove any tangles or mats still left in the coat.

When in need of a bath while away, try Bobbi Panther's Natural Pet Pampering Products. Bobbi has created a sampler set of four shampoos and one detailing conditioner (\$27) to deal with any fur-raising experiences. Whether you are itchy, stinky or just having a bad hair day, Dogone It Products can make all canines simply gorgeous (www.dogoneit.com).

Although we have all heard jokes about doggie breath, nothing is worse than having a friendly dog with bad breath try to kiss your face. Yuck! Please maintain healthy teeth and gums at least for the sake of preserving your social status. Have your owner brush your teeth on a regular basis, preferably once a day. Use a toothbrush designed specifically for pets because it is smaller and

softer. Never use human toothpaste because it contains ingredients that can make you sick if swallowed. Choose toothpaste such as Triple Pet All Natural Toothpaste (\$3.99) with a pleasant vanilla flavor (www.benedent.com/Tripletpet.htm). And remember, unlike most larger dogs that have little to no decay or tartar on the inside of their teeth due to the action of the tongue, small dogs need to have the inside of their teeth brushed to avoid bad periodontal disease in this area of the mouth. So be patient and let her brush all of your teeth, inside and out!

Looking your best is necessary to make a good impression, but remember routine grooming can contribute to your maintaining good health, too. 🐾

Happy Tails,
Miss Fido Manners

