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### **Pampering your pet!**

Depending on the species and breed you own, your grooming schedule will vary wildly! For some dogs a quick bath after being out in the puddles will be all that is needed, some cats will need regular grooming with professionals and daily brushing. Some key points that need to be considered with regard to grooming are:

- **Bathing** - We recommend bathing dogs once a week maximum. If bathing is carried out too regularly, it can strip the natural oils from the skin and coat and can lead to the skin becoming dry and flaky. It is also important that dogs are not bathed in human shampoo - this is the wrong pH for their skin and can cause problematic sensitive skin conditions. Cats tend to be harder to bath, but the same rules still apply.
- **Ear cleaning** - Some dogs will very rarely need their ears cleaning, but dogs with floppy ears or a significant amount of hair down their ears should be having their ears regularly cleaned. Most cats will not regularly need their ears cleaned but the ears should be regularly checked. Special ear cleaning solutions are available and can help to remove the more stubborn wax; slightly damp cotton wool is all you will need to clean around the top! Cotton wool buds should never be used - it is very important that nothing is pushed down a dog or cat's ear, as the eardrum is very easily ruptured.
- **Claw clipping** - While some dogs wear their claws down themselves, dogs that are less mobile or tend to be walked on softer surfaces can need their claws trimming. Ideally, the claws should be on a level with the pad when the foot is down, if you can hear the tip-tap of your dog coming to meet you they may need a trim! Cats generally keep their claws trim on trees or scratching posts, however they need regular checking as if they overgrow they can grow into the pad and cause infections and severe pain. Pet's claws contain a 'quick' running down the centre of the nail, if, while clipping, this is cut then it will hurt and bleed. The quick is pink in colour and easy to see in white claws, but impossible to see in most black claws. If you are unsure, the nursing team are happy to both advise and to clip claws for you.
- **Tooth brushing** - Some pets will allow their teeth to be brushed and others will not. Tooth brushing is the best way of maintaining an animal's dental health and can be introduced slowly over a period of time to make it a positive experience rather than a negative one. For more details on tooth brushing and options for dogs and cats that will not accept tooth brushing, please see a member of the nursing team.

**If you need any other information or wish to discuss any of the issues here further, please contact one of the nursing team at the Vale Veterinary Group Ltd, Kidderminster  
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