

A NOTE ON COATS:

Feeding your cat a proper diet will help keep her coat healthy, but grooming is also essential. Keeping your cat's coat healthy and mat-free is your responsibility.

Cats keep themselves clean by licking, so baths are generally unnecessary, but regular grooming with a long-tooth, stainless steel cat comb for longhairs, or a short-tooth, stainless steel cat comb or slicker brush for shorthairs, helps control shedding and prevents your cat from swallowing too much hair.

“Hairballs” form in the stomach and are usually passed or coughed up without trouble. But in extreme cases, large hairballs can be life threatening and require surgery. Regular grooming—especially of longhaired cats and particularly in hot weather—is the best prevention.

One of the most important rules when it comes to grooming your cat's coat is to never use scissors to remove a mat, regardless of how careful you may be. Cats have thin skin that can easily be nicked or cut without you realizing it, and the resulting wound could become infected and form an abscess.

If your cat has a mat that cannot be removed by combing or brushing, try a mat splitter or a seam ripper. You can work out the mat by tearing it through the middle and up toward the end of the mat, away from the cat's body. If your cat has too many mats and is not amenable to being groomed at home, consider having her professionally groomed by a veterinarian or reputable groomer.

Regular grooming sessions are a great way for guardians to bond with their cats. Many cats enjoy the grooming process and look forward to time spent with their guardian. So, in addition to helping keep your cat clean and mat-free, grooming also can be an enjoyable way for you and your cat to spend time together.