

Let's Be Honest ... SHED HAPPENS!



Shedding pet hair, or 'molting' as it is sometimes referred, is a leading concern most dog and cat lovers deal with. For those with allergies, shedding can aggravate serious health issues often dictating whether or not pet ownership is even possible.

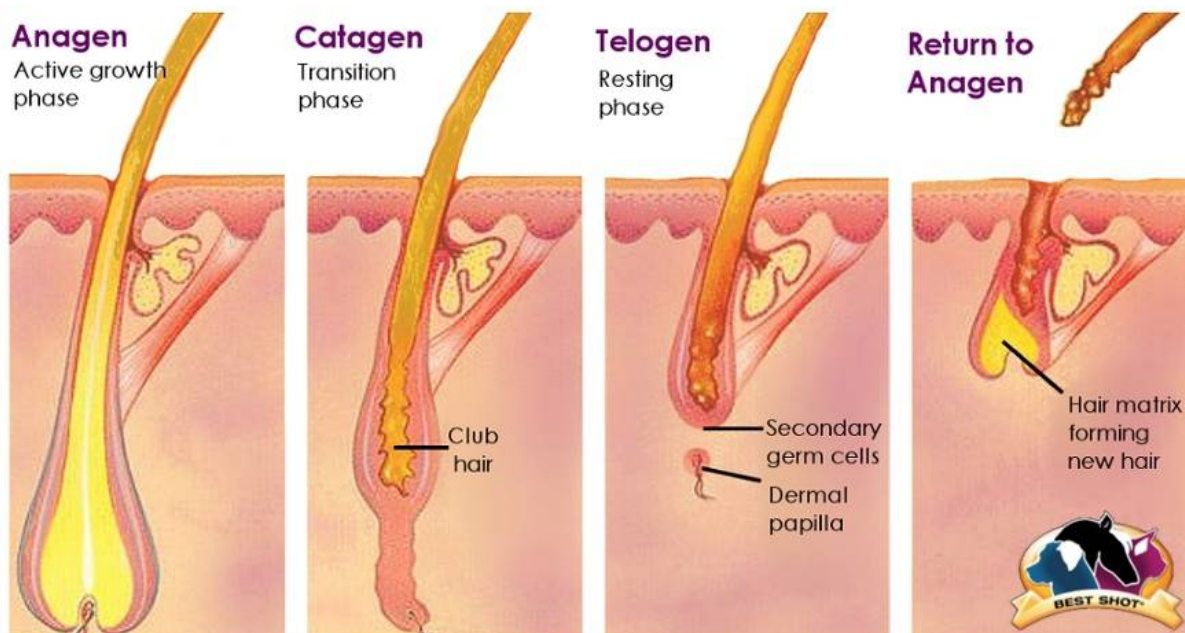
Why Must Pets Shed?

Most of us have no idea why our furry companions shed their hair in the first place. The question we've all asked at some point is, "Can shedding be stopped?" Unfortunately the answer is a resounding NO. It can however be mindfully managed with products like Best Shot's 3-Step System, but it also notably helps to know some facts about shedding and the intelligent design revealed by how an animals coat actually works. This knowledge leads to better application methods for optimal results.

Every dog or cat with a coat sheds its hair. It's merely a progressive cycle that occurs naturally on its own. So what's 'normal' and what's 'excessive'? This varies vastly from pet to pet. Many factors like hormones, gender, environment, stress, health, diet, genetics, neutered/spayed or not... will not only affect coat quality, but shedding volume and molting patterns too. Below is a diagram defining each phase of the shedding cycle.

Figure 1

Shedding Cycle Phases



Unlike human hair which grows one strand per follicle, dogs and cats can grow several strands per follicle. (See figure 2) Pet coats and fur primarily protect the skin and help regulate body temperature. When the coat is wet; water is blocked from getting down to the skin by hairs naturally coated in oil. Hair and fur can also act as armor to defend from sustaining injuries.

Types of Pet Hair Strands

1) Primary Hair Shaft

Known also as 'Guard' hairs or 'Outercoat', these strands are long, shiny, stiff and, dependent on the breed, can be soft or coarse. They protect the skin from water penetration and the Sun's rays.

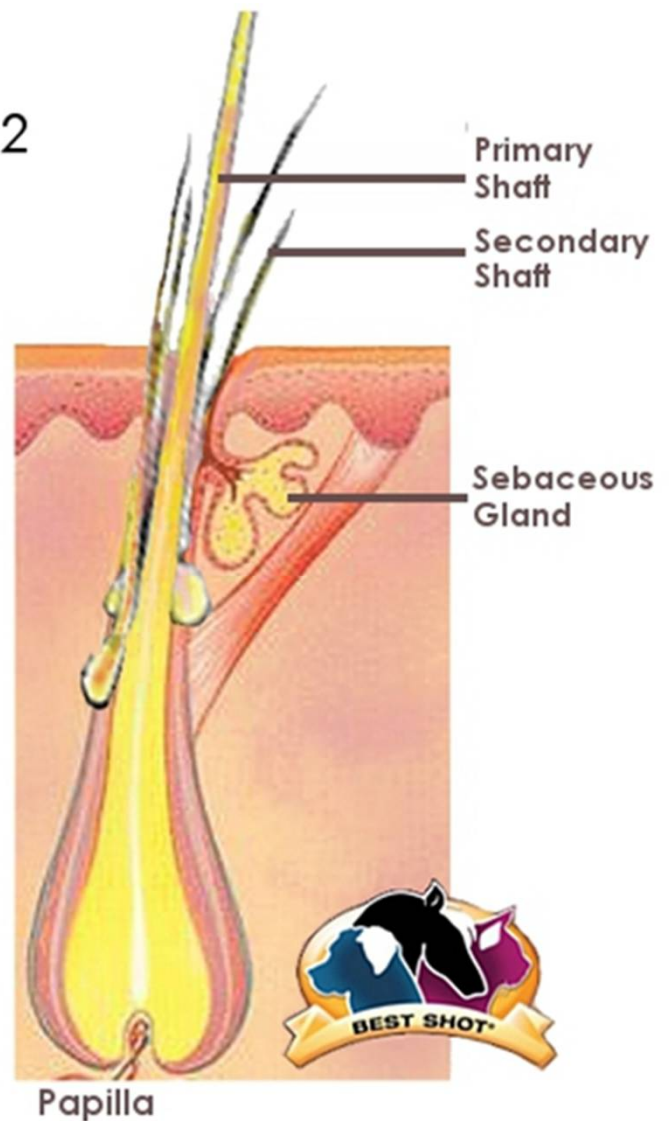
2) Secondary Hair Shaft

Known also as 'Undercoat' or 'Underfur', these strands provide an insulated coat layer that is short, fluffy, and thick. Typically one finds under-coat on breeds that live in colder climates. Some canines and felines from more temperate climates will have an undercoat for Winter months, then shed it in the Spring.

3) Whiskers

Whiskers grow to help dogs and cats with sensing their surroundings and for balance depending on its breed.

Figure 2

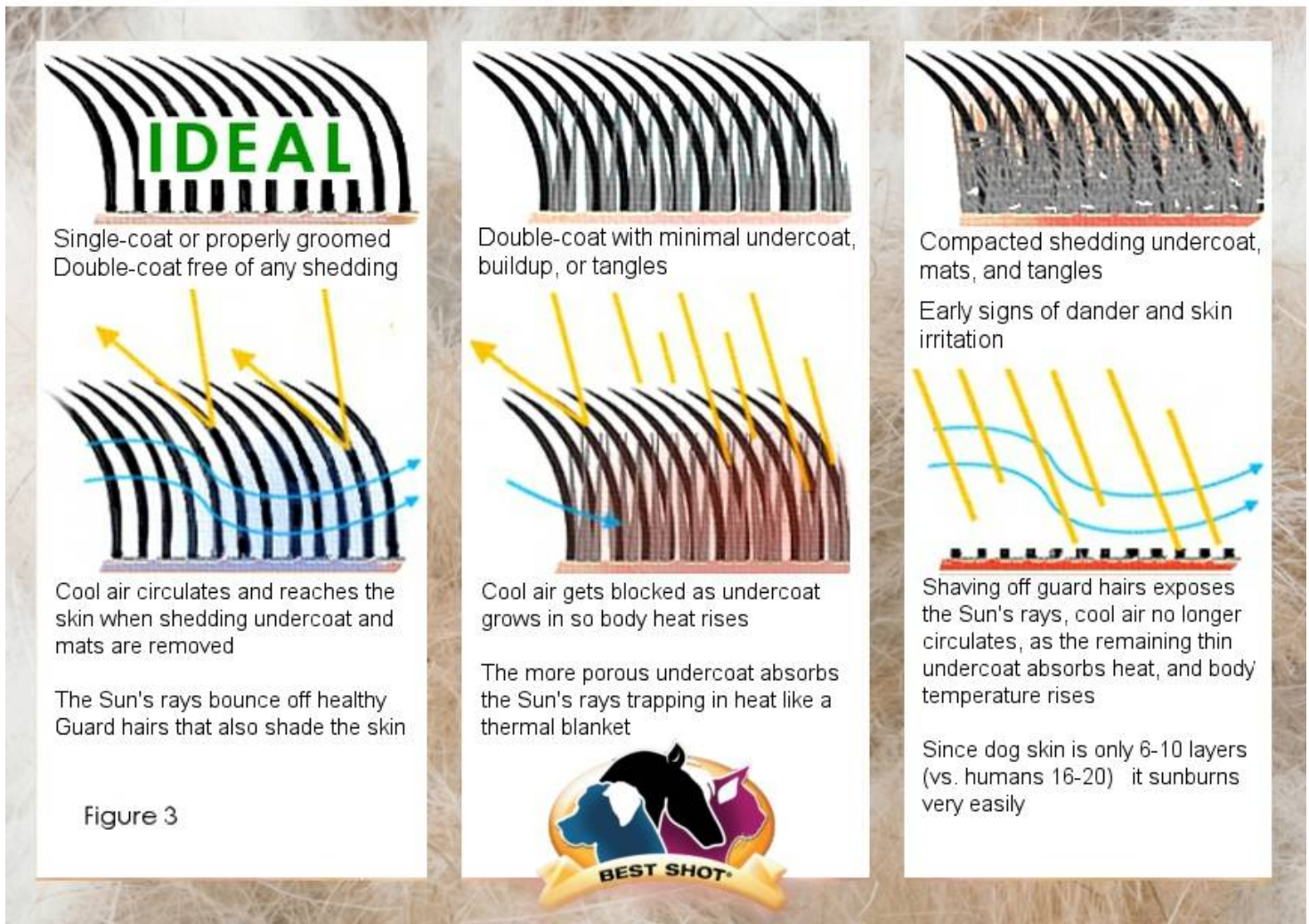


Double-coated or Single-coated

The biggest difference between 'heavy shedders' and those breeds who tend to hang on to their hair (often referred to as hypoallergenic breeds) is the kind of coat they possess. For example a 'double-coated' breed, has longer guard hairs (for waterproofing and protection) with a soft, downy undercoat (to block air and keep them warm and insulated).

In the canine world, double-coated breeds include dogs of all types and sizes like Border Collies, German Shepherds, Labradors, Malamutes, Pomeranians, Samoyeds, and Shiba Inus to name a few. These breed types and their mixes typically shed a lot of hair year-round.

How Dog and Cat Coats Work



Dog Breeds that Shed Most

The breed examples below have hair shafts with short life spans. It is this short life span that causes continuous hair shedding all year round:

- Akita
- Border Collie
- Chihuahua
- Pug
- Welsh Corgi
- St. Bernard
- German Shepherd
- Labrador Retriever
- Chow Chow
- Rottweiler

Hypoallergenic Dogs

The following breed examples shed very little because they have hair shafts with longer life spans. Many are still prone to tangles and mats nonetheless.

- Yorkshire Terrier
- Shih Tzu
- Bichon Frise
- Miniature Schnauzer
- Wheaten Terrier
- Poodle
- Scottish Terrier
- Italian Greyhound
- Giant Schnauzer
- Lakeland Terrier
- Portuguese Water Dog
- Afghan Hound
- Kerry Blue Terrier