

Moulting and the ‘Hormone of Darkness’

Quite commonly I am asked whether I can stop a dog from moulting. Now, moulting is normal in most of the pets I see. So the answer is, “no, or come to our new bathing and grooming room and see Natalie. Special introductory offers apply...”

Moulting - shedding - call it what you will, is a natural part of the hair replacement cycle in dogs. Indeed cats, rabbits, horses and lots of other hairy animals all do the same thing, but not as dramatically as dogs, where it is especially marked at this time of year in preparation for the change of season.

The trigger for shedding is not temperature, so turning on the heating is not a factor, it is day length. Factoid number one this month is that the signal is not light but more dark that counts. The more dark that is registered by receptors in your retina, the more they allow the pineal gland in the brain to produce melatonin. Melatonin is a chemical messenger that medically is known by its fantastic superhero name - “Hormone of Darkness”.

Truly excessive hair loss can indicate a medical problem. Alopecia - the absence of hair from where it usually grows - is not normal. In fact if you see bald spots I would suggest a visit to Abbey Vets. When present, causes like fleas, mites, bacterial skin infections and allergies make dogs pull out their fur. Internal disease like hormonal conditions can cause hair to drop out or stop growing. Interestingly some dogs develop marked alopecia every winter. Sometimes this response is treated by none other than that hormonal villain, melatonin. In extreme cases “The Hormone of Darkness” comes to the rescue in tablet form. Hooray.

Call 01873 854308 for
Abergavenny Grooming
by Natalie at Abbey Vets.

