

## Chinchilla Grooming Questions

### Basic help for grooming chinchillas.

*By Kevin Schargen*

Q. Do they shed their coat?

A. A chinchilla sheds its coat several times each year. Regularly comb (with a fine-toothed comb) your chinchilla during these periods. Bring fur loss accompanied by skin irritations to the attention of your veterinarian.

Take care not to grab a chinchilla's coat. If a chinchilla's coat is grabbed, the animal may lose fur in that area.

Q. Do chinchillas produce unpleasant odors?

A. Adding to the magnetism of this captivating companion is its lack of a natural odor. The only smells associated with chinchillas stem from poor cage-cleaning habits.

Q. Is it absolutely necessary to provide a dust bath?

A. Dust bathing is an indispensable part of healthy chinchilla living. Although comical to observe, this activity serves the very serious role of eliminating excess moisture and oil from the coat.

Dust (volcanic ash) specifically made for chinchillas is available in most pet shops. Pour some chinchilla dust into a clean cat litter box, place it in the cage, and let the blissful wallowing begin.

Give your chinchilla access to a dust bath at least a few times a week, and be sure to increase the frequency during the humid summer months.