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# The Care of The Bolognese

📅 18th June 2016 👤 Melanie Thomas, Chairperson/Editor

*This article is by Angela Ferrullo, Vicepresidente of the Club del Bolognese e Maltese (CBM) – by E.N.C.I – FCI*

*(translation by Mia Ejerstad)*

[www.clubdelbologneseemaltese.it](http://www.clubdelbologneseemaltese.it)

## CARE OF THE BOLOGNESE

- Hair long all over the body
- Shorter on the muzzle
- Yellow markings on the coat should be penalized
- Bolognese who are over groomed, also using scissor, or who have artificial cosmetics, or without ringlet (keeping always in mind their ages) must be strictly penalized

A well-kept and correctly cared for dog is a happy and healthy dog – and is more pleasing to the eye too. A Bolognese is not difficult to maintain in good condition, but requires nonetheless daily attention in keeping it clean, correctly groomed and by feeding it properly. The feeding is perhaps more important than we sometimes think, but much of the well-being of the dog is directly connected to its food – as for us humans too. This shows in many ways – temperament wise the dog is more balanced, he is more resistant to stress, the skin is elastic, non-greasy and without dandruff, the coat quality is enhanced and the colour and pigmentation is strong and vivid.

The coat care consists of keeping the coat clean and tangle free by regular brushing and combing about twice a week, using a soft pin-brush and a comb with wide teething. I prefer the use of these tools, instead of i.e. the slicker brush, which with its fine and thick teeth easily destroys, if used improperly, the coat texture and the typical ringlets, such an important the characteristic of the breed. However, using the slicker brush delicately is a help to open up some tangles, but it must be done with great caution.

The brushing and combing must be done very systematically, in order to be sure not to leave any part not groomed or with tangles, starting from the head and continuing down by the neck, body, legs, feet and tail. The brushing and/or combing should be done millimetre per millimetre, from the skin and outwards following the direction of the coat.

## EARS

At the same time the coat care is done, once or twice a week, also the ears should be regularly examined and cared for. Hairs growing in the ear canal should be pulled out with especially designed tweezers with a steady and decisive hand. Doing this correctly the dog will not feel pain, but only a light nuisance. Never cut the these hairs but pull them out. Doing so the hairs will not regrow very fast, and there will not be any build-up of dirt and earwax, which easily leads to ear infection or other fastidious problems.

With a cotton disc, as those for removing make up, lightly soaked in with cleansing milk or other products made for ear-cleaning, it is easy to clean the outer part of the ear. There are also several valid products, that can be used while washing the dog. These products lose up the debris, which is coming out by itself while the dog is shaking himself, and there is no need to go deep into the ear. These products evaporate by themselves, so there is no need neither to dry up the ear. Often a dirty ear is the reason for excessive tearing too.

## EYES

Eyes should be kept clean and controlled daily. There are several eye-cleansing products on the market, with chamomile, or one can use 3% boric acid, or just simply clean the eye with a cotton gauze and a bit of warm water. Important is to clean and dry well the coat around the eye. The food also has a great effect on excess tear staining for example dry foods with very high proteins (which are mainly flour proteins, known to easily create allergic reactions) this seem to increase the problem. Some dogs are more predisposed then others, or in certain periods for example for bitches near or during the heat, congenital factors and so on, but one should always take this problem into account when planning the breeding program.

When you notice an increase or an excessive onset of tear staining, take your dog to the vet for a more profound examination, to be sure that it is not conjunctivitis, or a problem such as prolapse of the lacrimal gland, which especially affects white dogs, the typical orange/reddish-brownish colour (in the

eye there are substances such as enzymes, which effectively dissolve the white colour of the hair, making it dark). Tears are excessive for several reasons, such as inflammation, conjunctivitis, internal parasites and so on. In many pets a very common cause of this, is the nasolacrimal duct that fails to contain all the tears. Then these purge from the eye causing excessive tearing and making the appearance of the eye contour unpleasant and coloured. The eye specialist vet, basing on his/her experience, will then opt for a drug therapy or other treatment. If there is not possible to find the cause of the excessive tear staining that goes on a long time, it can be a good idea to change from dry food to fresh raw feeding. The dog might be allergic to some of the proteins used in the commercial dry food, and by switching to raw feeding, where the proteins are not a mix of unidentified farinas, in some months of time the problem is resolved.

## **PAWS & NAILS**

The care of the feet is important so that the toes will be well-arched and kept tight together. The nails must be kept short by cutting them regularly, every 10-14 days. Letting the nails grow too long will inevitably lead to a flatter foot. Use nail cutters for dogs. It is not very difficult to learn how to cut, but if you still feel very unsure, ask your veterinarian or your groomer to do it.

The coat around the feet needs to be trimmed with scissors regularly, following the shape of the foot but leaving enough so that the nails are covered by the coat. On the underside of the foot keep short-cut the coat between the pads and the toes, in order that the dog will not slip unnecessarily and to avoid tangles between the toes.

## **ANUS VULVA & FORESKIN**

Also these parts need to be kept clean, by cutting the coat short around.

## **TEETH**

Teeth should be regularly examined and kept clean to avoid problems with infections of the gum and so on. Brushing them with a toothpaste for dogs or a very light solution of hydrogen peroxide, for dental use available in the pharmacy, once a week is a good idea. If there is however a build up of tartar, it should be removed regularly. If you are not able to do it yourself with the help of a tooth scaler, then take the dog to the vet.

## **FEEDING**

Everything starts with the nutrition, and we can determine in a decisive way the well-being of our dogs by being attentive in our choice of nutrients in the diet. The quality of the nutrients is of paramount importance. The choice of protein is mainly based on life-style and age of the dog, for example growing puppies/youngsters, stud dogs and brood bitches, show dogs, senior dogs and so on. An excellent diet

consists of feeding raw meat or fish with addition of green tripe, cartilage, heart and liver (2-3% of the total food). Add to this daily some vegetable oil (corn), a complete vitamin- and mineral supplement. In periods can be also good idea to add oat milk which is rich in folic acid (very useful for pregnant bitches) and hemp milk which contains high levels of Omega 3. Well-known for high levels of Omega 3 is salmon oil.

## **PUPPIES**

Get the puppy used to be brushed and bathed regularly. This will not only keep the puppy nice and clean, but he will also get used to be handled and soon he will look forward to these occasions. Never bath a puppy that has been very recently inoculated or that is not in full health.

Obviously the room where you groom your puppy should be warm enough and without draft. Before the bath brush and comb all the coat very systematically, to be sure there are no tangles left. Use only shampoos and conditioners for dogs, never those for human. If you are not using a specific puppy shampoo, be sure to dilute the shampoo enough. Most shampoos work efficiently also very diluted. How much to dilute depends on each shampoo, but a general rule is one part shampoo in 20-50 parts of water. Only if the dog is very dirty, the shampoo should be less diluted. Dilute the shampoo in a bowl with warm water. Mix it very well.

Wet the coat with hand warm water, apply the already diluted shampoo with a shower sponge. Massage it gently into the coat. Rinse really well so there are no residues of shampoo left in the coat. If using a conditioner, apply it now. Most conditioners work very well also diluted with warm water, and they are much easier in this way to get well distributed all over the coat. Otherwise, spread some conditioner in your hands and apply it evenly all over the coat. Apply again some warm water on the coat and massage it in. Wait a minute and rinse again. First towel dry the coat by dabbing it gently, then brush it swiftly before drying it completely with a hair dryer. Be careful not to use too hot airflow, as it is not good for the coat, but even more it can almost burn the skin of the puppy if not being attentive enough.

Around the age of 5-7 months it can be a good idea to shape up the coat. This is the age when the puppy coat is partly changed and by trimming off with the scissors uneven points (a centimetre or so) will help a more homogeneous growth of a quality adult coat. Using thinning shears, and not straight scissors, the shaping up will look more natural without neat visible cuts.

## **THE ADULT DOG**

Before the bath, brush and comb the coat very carefully and systematically, being sure to have brushed all the dog from head to tail and paying special attention to the areas where tangles are formed easier: behind/under the ears, around the elbows, inside the thighs and the feet. Use a soft pin-brush and a comb with large teething. The use of a slicker-brush should be extremely limited to delicately opening

up tangles where the other tools are not enough. Line-brush the coat from the skin and out, millimetre per millimetre, to ensure that the coat is opened up and that there are no tangles left. The bath can be done every day if using the correct shampoos and conditioners that respects the natural PH of the skin. However, it is advisable to bath the Bolognese regularly, about every 7-10 days at least.

The water should be lukewarm and the shampoo diluted on beforehand in a bowl. Dilution depends on type of shampoo, but if the dog is not excessively dirty it can be diluted up to 20-50 times. For dogs living in the town/residential areas, where the dirt is often depending of the smog, the dilution can be one part shampoo to three-four parts of water. Use shampoo for white coats or with nutritious oils. If using the self-evaporating ear-cleaning products, now is the time to apply it, when the dog is in the bath tub. Eventual debris that is coming out by itself, can then be easily washed away. Wet the coat and with a shower sponge apply the shampoo-solution all over, being careful that the shampoo is not getting in the ears or in the eyes. Massage gently the coat so that the shampoo is penetrating and cleaning well. Rinse well. Apply your favourite conditioner (as described for the puppy-bath), leave it in for some minutes, then rinse the coat lightly. Towel dry the coat by delicately dabbing it, thus not creating new tangles. Then brush swiftly the coat with the pin brush and proceed with the dryer. There are many good dryers on the market today with different levels of heat. Important is not to use too hot airflow because it will make the coat brittle and easy burns the skin of the dog too. Start to dry the body coat, then the feet and finish with the head and ears. Don't brush the coat while drying it, but use the fingers to lift the coat so that the warm air can penetrate and dry it. To allow volume to the coat direct the jet of air from the bottom upwards. Once the coat is dry, apply some antistatic spray (or a mix of water and conditioner) into the coat so that the ringlets will reform themselves more easily.

However, not all Bolognese dogs have the same type, quality and texture of coat, and these characteristics are varying from dog to dog, depending also of age and sex. Therefore, shampoos and conditioners are working differently on one dog to another.

Some also prefer not to use dryers, but allowing the coat self-dry in a warm room or outside in the sun. I prefer though to use the dryer and finishing the drying-procedure, when the coat is practically dry, with some cool airflow. Today we also find excellent dryers with antistatic program too.

If the dog is going to be shown, my advice is to wash it at least a couple of days before, in order that the coat can naturally reform its ringlets and that the lanolin will have time to be reconstituted giving due reflection, firmness and elasticity to the coat. The coat of the Bolognese should not remain flat after having been touched, but it should return voluminous naturally and by itself. This is another feature that distinguishes the Bolognese coat from other breeds.

Many years ago, when it still wasn't easy to find special products for the coat care, it was common use to wash regularly the parts that more easily get dirty (around the muzzle, feet and hind legs, especially in

the males) using an excellent neutral soap for the laundry – the Marsiglia soap. Surely it could not promise a miracle, but by using it constantly it was possible to the coat keep fairly white anyway!

A couple of times a year the coat definitely should be adjusted with scissors, taking care to cut, only where necessary, the tips of brittle or damaged hair, keeping the shape of the coat as natural as possible and according to the dictates of the Italian breed standard.

If the dog gets dirty and there is no possibility to wash it, a good solution is to spray the dirty parts with some water, distribute potato- or corn starch on the wet parts, allow it to absorb the wet and dirt and then brush it all out. The starch works as a dry shampoo, it is a natural product and not harmful, it does not alter the structure or colour. Just be careful that it does not enter in the nostrils, eyes or ears. After having brushed the coat and when the dog shakes, the starch will fall out of the coat and leave it clean enough, until a traditional bath can be done.

Finally, my advice is to present the Bolognese in a natural way, avoiding the use of aggressive whiteners, hair sprays, chalk powders or other whitening sprays containing chalk. Remember that the coat quality is also to a great part genetic, but also the feeding is very important. The adult dog can be given some fish based feeding, containing the worthy Omega 3 and other essential fatty acids. Summing it all up, the constant and daily care will make even more beautiful and charming this little Italian gem from ancient history, but certainly of young reconstruction.

Angela Ferrullo

(translation by Mia Ejerstad)

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**Melanie Thomas, Chairperson/Editor**

FOUNDER MEMBER

## 8 thoughts on “The Care of The Bolognese”



**Melanie Thomas, Chairperson/Editor**

📅 17th July 2015 at 1:16 pm 🔗 [Permalink](#)

This article was originally written in Italian and translated into English. As Italy is the breeds country of origin, this advice and experience is of great interest to all of us. We are welcoming members of The Bolognese Dog Club UK to leave comments on the article including their personal hints and suggestions on looking after the breed.



📅 1st December 2015 at 1:46 pm 🔗 [Permalink](#)

Some good tips here especially about using corn starch if you cant bath them. What is corn starch lol does it go under another name here in Uk



**Melanie Thomas, Chairperson/Editor**

📅 1st December 2015 at 2:08 pm 🔗 [Permalink](#)

Corn starch, sometimes referred to as corn flour, is a carbohydrate extracted from the endosperm of corn. This white powdery substance is used for many culinary, household, and industrial purposes.

**Deana Mee (renewal Jan 2026)**

📅 10th February 2016 at 12:24 pm 🔗 Permalink

As a newcomer to the bolognese it was great reading and not so disimmilar to looking after the coat of my japchin who has now sadly passed thank you.

**Gail O'Boyle**

📅 13th February 2016 at 10:45 am 🔗 Permalink

Thanks for the reply Melanie have just noticed it. I may try this on holiday as I can't always bath him.



📅 3rd March 2016 at 9:07 pm 🔗 Permalink

Great article, thanks! I don't want to show or breed my Betsy as she has a small defect that makes her a pet only, but I'd really love to know which shampoo's are PH balanced and safe for daily bathing? My vet told me I must not bath her more than every few weeks, but she gets so dirty! If anyone wouldn't mind recommending me a good ph balanced whitening shampoo, it would be so helpful!

**kath thompson**

📅 3rd April 2016 at 7:47 pm 🔗 Permalink

Hi

I have a beautiful bolognese puppy 20weeks old. Her name is poppy. I'm managing to groom her each day, but she seems uncomfortable when I comb her front paws. Any ideas why this might be. Also I'm struggling to get her to sit still whilst I pluck her ears. I haven't managed to do that yet. Any ideas would be appreciated. I'm so happy I stumbled across this breed whilst looking on the internet as she is so adorable.

**Melanie Thomas, Chairperson/Editor**

📅 3rd April 2016 at 9:12 pm 🔗 Permalink

Hi Kath, one of my dogs doesn't like having her front legs groomed. You must be firm and persist. Just be careful if she still has her dew claws as the comb can catch those. Yes some puppies don't like having their ears plucked either, if you cant do that I would go to



a professional groomer and get it done, otherwise you can end up with a matt of hair in the ear and then an ear infection.

Comments are closed.

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TOY & UTILITY DAY Bolognese Judge Mrs R. McCarry-Beattie Rita is a well-known and respected judg...

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### SOUTH WESTERN TOY DOG CLUB



BOLOGNESE – JUDGE:- : Nick Gourley (Witchstone) LIMIT & OPEN classes JUNCTION 24 LTD” SE...

March 16 *at* Junction 24 Ltd

### SPIRE TOY DOG SOCIETY Open Show



ALFRETON LEISURE CENTRE Church Street, Alfreton, Derbyshire DE55 7BD BOLOGNESE judge Bruce Jackson (...)

March 16 *at* ALFRETON LEISURE CENTRE

### THE NORTH EAST OF ENGLAND TOY DOG SOCIETY – OPEN SHOW



at Ferryhill Sports Centre, Lambton Road, Ferryhill DL17 8TB BOLOGNESE Loraine Ratter 33 LD/B 34 OD/...

March 22 *at* Ferryhill Sports Centre

### UK Toy Championship Show



Bolognese Judge Mrs Mary Pascoe NEW BINGLEY HALL, STAFFORD ST18 0BD Entries to:POSTAL ENTRIES  
CLOSE...

March 29 at The New Bingley Hall

## SOUTH EASTERN COUNTIES TOY DOG SOCIETY Open Show



in the AGRICULTURAL HALL Barker Road, Maidstone, Kent ME16 8LW Bolognese Judge Mr Peter Young  
(Lotsm...

April 20 at AGRICULTURAL HALL

## West of England Ladies Kennel Society (WELKS) Championship Show



Toy & Hound day Bolognese judge: MR TONY ALLCOCK OBE THREE COUNTIES SHOWGROUND MALVERN,  
WORCESTE...

April 28 at Three Counties Showground

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