

## My Cat Doesn't Have Bristles on Her Tongue

**CatChannel veterinary expert Arnold Plotnick, DVM, offers advice on a puzzling condition.**

*By Arnold Plotnick, DVM*

Posted: Oct. 10, 2008, 3 a.m. EDT

**Q:** I have a 6-month-old female Siamese cat. When she licks me, I noticed there was no "sandpaper" texture to her tongue. Her fur is very messy and dirty. Her brother, same age, is a male spayed and his coat is very fluffy and soft. What should I do?

**A:** This is a situation I have not come across. The first thing that needs to be determined is whether she does have bristles on her tongue. I have seen cats that have had ulcers on their tongue, either from calicivirus, FIV or contact with a caustic substance. Sometimes after the ulcers heal, the bristles do not grow back on the ulcerated area. It would also be interesting to know if her fur is messy and dirty despite her attempts to clean herself, or if it's messy and dirty because she doesn't bother to clean herself at all. If she grooms herself like a regular cat, but her fur remains scraggly, and her tongue has no bristles (or fewer bristles than normal), then it would be reasonable to conclude that this was the cause. Some cats, however, are unkempt simply because they stop grooming themselves, although this is much more common in frail older cats and would be unusual in a 6-month-old cat. Regardless, it sounds as if you'll need to help her out with the grooming chores. There are a lot of options available to you at your local pet store, including pet wipes, dry shampoos, wet shampoos and, of course, a professional groomer.