While normal tearing keeps the eyes/corneas hydrated and is healthful for your Shih Tzu, this is to provide helpful information and tips regarding solutions to face staining on our dogs, both pets and show dogs. First, let’s investigate the reasons why face staining occurs:

1. A genetically inherited tendency to tear excessively and excrete minerals and chemicals through the tear ducts, especially when teething. For more information, see this article: [http://shihtzu.org/?q=teething_issues](http://shihtzu.org/?q=teething_issues).

2. Many dogs have difficulty digesting/processing foods which contain ingredients that can create a discoloration on light/white hair such as beet pulp, protein ingredients, carbohydrates w/yeast and trace amounts of food additives such as iron that are designed to improve the quality of nutrition but can also stain hair.

3. High amounts of minerals and calcium in their drinking water and drinking from bowls and not water lickers. Not only moustaches but beards can stain due to wet faces with high levels of minerals.

4. Dog allergic reactions to food ingredients, environmental conditions, and/or products introduced to them both topically and internally.

5. More than normal tearing or salivating related to irritating biological conditions such as gum disease and ear infections.

6. Stress that can cause dogs to pant, salivate, and/or tear more.

Note: Always have wellness vet exams and check with your vet and breeder for safe products and any specific product recalls or bans.

Suggestions for Shih Tzu pet companions:

1. Keep hair out of the eyes, inner duct hair either plucked/pulled/drawn down so as not to float on top of your dog’s corneas. Provide daily care with hair around eyes kept clean and trimmed so as not to obstruct vision.

2. If you choose to allow hair to grow longer, i.e. mustache, topknot, band it away from eyes and mouths. Please seek your breeder’s advice as to how to trim, and arrange facial hair to keep face clean and dry. Otherwise a cute pet clip around the face should be sufficient.

3. Make sure there are no health or environmental irritants that can cause extra tearing or salivating.

4. Suggestions for conformation show Shih Tzu:

5. Watch the quality of food and its ingredients to know if there are extra minerals, calcium and other ingredients which might be too difficult for absorption in your dog’s biology. I suggest food without high content of additives...please review ingredients and ratings on many internet locations (www.dogfoodadvisor.com is one), and use water filtered at home or purchased.

6. Keep the face clean and dry by washing, drying and banding back, please be careful not to wrap bands too tightly; loosen hair so is not pulling on face, scalp or nostrils.

7. When using powder to dry (I like baby powder that does not contain talc and boric acid powder mixed 50/50%) dogs in maintenance bands, always be very careful when applying the powder to keep it out of eyes, mouth and nostrils.

8. Other products to consider are food additives with antibacterial, anti-fungal properties to reduce staining, topical powder to do the same, whitening and clarifying shampoos from many vendors, no rinse daily shampoos to face wash in between baths. There has been an FDA ban on Angel Eyes and other such products and talc also should not be used.

9. Daily gentle eye cleaning with sterile eye wash like ocsosoft from your vet, including cleaning crusty debris from eyes with damp cotton ball and fingers and comb also helps prevent staining. Some dogs benefit from adding ¼ tsp. of powdered buttermilk to their food.

10. As a last resort, if you decide you must use a bleaching product to lighten, you must make certain that the hair upon which it is applied is clean and has been conditioned very well, and rinsed. You can use the cornstarch, baby powder and low percentage of hydrogen peroxide method. However, the results may dry and break the hair cuticle. Should the hair come into contact with food/water, it can easily re-stain. The re-staining can be even darker than the original staining, so you will always need to make sure the treated hair has a protective barrier such as perm wrapping papers or specific dog wrapping papers. Always make certain to condition very well and rinse the hair at each grooming session. Fumes from bleaching products can irritate your dog’s eyes, making him tear more, rub and injure his eyes....which is what you DON’T want to occur. Please be very careful about the dangers of using any product around eyes and on faces, especially bleach!!! The health of your Shih Tzu is of utmost importance.