

Fleas and ticks

Controlling fleas and ticks

The best way to control flea problems is to prevent them from happening in the first place. Fortunately, developments in veterinary parasite control in recent years have made the twofold goal of eliminating fleas on pets and preventing further infestations much easier to achieve. Available for both dogs and cats, new insecticides and insect growth regulators in easy-to-use topical or oral forms not only eliminate any existing fleas, but also work long-term to prevent future infestations. This is accomplished either by killing the parasites before they can reproduce or by preventing their eggs from developing into normal adult fleas. Consult your veterinarian for advice about the proper product for your pet. Furthermore, thorough daily vacuuming of high-traffic areas and frequent washing of your pet's bedding will also go a long way in reducing the flea population in your home.

Some of the same types of topical or oral products used to control flea infestation are also effective against ticks. Tick collars are also available. Such treatments should be combined with daily examinations and tick removal for those pets, especially dogs, who are frequently outdoors in areas with high tick populations. Ask your veterinarian for information about the situation in your locality. Clearing long grasses and removing leaves, grass clippings and other organic debris will also help reduce the presence of ticks by disturbing their natural outdoor habitats.

When a parasite picks your pet for a meal

If, despite your best efforts at control, you find that fleas or ticks have crawled (or jumped) on board your pet, you will have to use a product that will kill and/or repel the parasites. These include once-a-month topical treatments, sprays, oral medication, shampoos, collars and, to combat fleas, injectable medication. Once again, you should ask your veterinarian for advice about what the most appropriate product for your pet is. And remember, it is perfectly normal to see live fleas or ticks on a pet immediately after a topical treatment, spray, shampoo, collar, etc. is applied. Many believe that this means the product is not working, but the fleas or ticks have to fully absorb the product before they will be affected, which may take from a few hours to a few days.



Facts about fleas

- Worldwide, there are about 3,000 different types of fleas, but the cat flea (*Ctenocephalides felis*) is the most common to be found on dogs and cats.
- Adult fleas can jump 600 times an hour. Each jump, in terms of the flea's size, is the equivalent of a person clearing a 50-storey building.
- The record jump for a flea (usually 2–8 mm long) is 33 cm.
- In just 30 days, 25 adult female fleas can multiply to 250,000 fleas.

Tips about ticks

- A female tick can lay up to 3,000 eggs.
- Except for eggs, ticks need a blood meal to progress to the next stage of their life cycle.
- Some ticks can live for more than a year without a meal.
- The time from attachment of a paralysis tick to the onset of symptoms can be just a few days.

Comments

© Registered Trademark of Intervet International B.V. The Netherlands.
Copyright © 2012 MSD Animal Health. All rights reserved. S0882A

VETERINARY CLINIC STAMP

myVet
ONLINE

ADVICE

INFORMATION

CARE

SUPPORT

EXPERTISE