



The Truth About Flea & Tick Prevention

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Fleas, ticks, and other external parasites are not only gross critters, but they are also a significant health risk to cats and dogs. Fleas can consume large amounts of blood, resulting in serious blood loss. Fleas can also spread tapeworms and blood-borne diseases to pets. Furthermore, the flea's life cycle allows the developing young fleas to live for up to a year in carpets, crevices in the floor, and bedding. These fleas can then hatch out months later and infest your dog or cat all over again. There are several species of ticks in our region, and all of them can carry diseases, including Lyme disease, tick paralysis, and others.

It is important to make sure that your four-legged friends are protected from these parasites and the diseases that they can carry! The best way to do so is with regular use of safe and effective preventatives. Flea and tick preventions come in three major forms – topical liquids to apply to the pet's skin, chewable tablets that can be fed as treats, and collars.

Topical flea and tick preventions include products such as Revolution and Frontline Gold, and are typically applied by parting your pets' haircoat and administering the liquid directly onto your pet's skin. These products are either absorbed into your pet's system or spread throughout the haircoat in your pet's oil glands. Either way, they kill fleas and ticks before they are able to cause harm, suck blood, or reproduce. Some of these products are prescription-only, but others are available without a prescription. Most of them need to be re-applied every thirty days.

In the last few years, oral flea and tick preventions have quickly become very popular choices for dogs. These flavored tablets include brands such as Nexgard and Simparica. They are highly effective at killing external parasites quickly and their effects are sustained from 30 days to 12 weeks, depending on the product used. Almost every dog loves the taste of these chews, which makes them very convenient to administer. Although the chewable flea and tick preventatives are very safe for most dogs, they can increase the risk of seizures in dogs that have a prior history of seizure disorders. This is a very small

risk, but if your dog has had seizures in the past, it may be best to select a different product for flea and tick protection.

The last category of preventatives available for cats and dogs are flea collars. Most flea collars range from completely ineffective (they don't kill fleas!) to downright dangerous, with serious systemic side effects. However, there is one flea and tick collar that we do recommend: the Seresto collar is both safe *and* effective. It provides up to 8 months of protection and is available for both dogs and cats.

Whether you choose a topical, chewable, or Seresto collar for your pet's flea and tick protection, it is important that you purchase it from a reputable source. Unfortunately, many products sold over the counter at box stores and co-ops are not coming directly from the manufacturers. They have been proven to sometimes contain artificial products which are not effective or safe. We recommend only purchasing your flea and tick preventions from a veterinarian, where they are backed by a safety and efficacy guarantee.

Some products designed for dogs are very dangerous for cats, so read the labels carefully before applying any product! No matter what product you use, the most important factor is that it is both safe and effective for your pets. Your veterinarian can help you choose products that have solid scientific evidence behind them, so that you can rest easy knowing your pets are protected from fleas, ticks, and the diseases they carry.