

FLEA CONTROL ALTERNATIVES

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Animals have natural immunity to parasite infestation, fleas are no exception. Dogs and cats have natural immunity to thwart the majority of fleas, but a bite or two here and there can still be expected. What you should not find are large populations of fleas in your pet's coat or bed, including flea dirt and eggs. The immune system, closely intertwined with the endocrine system, is responsible for this natural ability to repel fleas. When the immune or endocrine system is imbalanced, fleas will opportunistically take over. Or your pet may show allergic reactions to the few flea bites that occur naturally. Flea control should cover many aspects influencing your pet's health (physical, emotional and medical) and environment.

Cleanliness is an excellent way to reduce and control flea populations by regularly removing at least one of the life cycles. Regularly vacuuming with a high quality vacuum cleaner and washing towels and bedding used on or near your pet helps tremendously. I recommend vacuuming carpets & the dog beds every two or three days. Vacuum well used areas regularly even if you don't tidy up. Fleas don't like to be in areas away from bodies and activity.

Food and plant-derived substances are a healthy substitute for chemical-based products. But are they strong enough to control fleas and ticks? Why are some people more prone to mosquito bites than others? There's a nutritional reason, and it has to do with the strength of each person's immune system and the levels of B complex, zinc, selenium and antioxidants in the body and bloodstream. A strong immune system and high nutrient levels help repel insects. (source: www.alternativemedicine.com)

DO NOT USE BOMBS

A FEW FACTS ABOUT FLEAS

Fleas are similar to cockroaches in the fact that they adapt to their environment. They become stronger and more immune to popular chemicals with each generation.

Most fleas are living in your pet's environment, rather than in its fur. Every flea found on your pet means that there are approximately 30 more living in your home. However, they are also easy to kill on your pet and in your home.

A single flea can lay as many as 60 eggs per day. The lifespan of a flea is about 90 days.

PRODUCT CAUTION

Even if all the ingredients in a flea repellent product are natural, this doesn't ensure that they won't be toxic to your pet. For instance, d'Limonene, which is derived from citrus peels and found in many natural anti-flea products, **can be highly toxic to cats**. Herbal flea collars, though they don't contain the poisons that conventional flea collars do, come with the same warning: do not let children play with the collar. If it's not good for your child, why would it be good for your pet?

It is advisable to read product labels carefully. For example, one line of supposedly natural flea products contains "all natural synthetic Pyrethrin." Pyrethrins are insecticides derived from the African chrysanthemum (Pyrethrum). Pyrethroids are synthetic derivatives of pyrethrins. Both are commonly used in conventional preparations which make the product sound innocent because it's derived from a flower. But pyrethrins alone can be toxic to the animal and pyrethroids expose your animal to more chemicals.

HOME REMEDIES

Mule Team Borax

Sprinkled into the carpeting and onto wood floors around the molding and in crevices will kill larvae, young and adult fleas on contact by scraping holes in the exoskeleton. The insect then dries up. It is nontoxic unless inhaled in large quantities or swallowed in large amounts. Sprinkle under furniture and into other nooks and crannies around your house, sweep in deep into carpets and leave for a minimum of 30 minutes, up to 2 days. It's better if walked over and really buffed in. Then thoroughly vacuum up.

Diatomaceous Earth (Food Grade Only)

Can be purchased in bulk from organic gardening supply. Sprinkle under furniture and into other nooks and crannies around your house, sweep in deep into carpets and leave for a minimum of 30 minutes, up to 2 days. It's better if walked over and really buffed in. Then thoroughly vacuum up.

Brewer's/Nutritional Yeast

1 teaspoon daily for cats and small dogs

1 Tablespoon for a 50-pound dog

Some animals are yeast intolerant and will react with a skin allergy. Discontinue use if this occurs. Combine the yeast in your animal's food, and consider doubling the dosage during peak flea season.

Raw Apple Cider Vinegar

1 teaspoon daily in your pet's drinking water. Apple cider vinegar helps strengthen the immune system.

Vitamin B1 (thiamine)

Please ask your veterinarian for the correct amount of a vitamin B1 supplement for your pet.

CONTROLLING FLEAS : INDOOR ENVIRONMENT

Grooming

Combing your pet daily with a flea comb is an important part of flea control. Bathing animals regularly is also advised as often as once or twice a week for short periods of time while getting an outbreak under control. There is no need to use chemical flea shampoos. A water bath with a gentle, natural soap that won't irritate their skin will kill adult fleas.

Set a trap

Plug-in flea traps are available that use a light, though heat, to attract fleas and a sticky patch to keep them.

CONTROLLING FLEAS: OUTDOOR CONTROL

Nematodes

While you can't kill off the fleas that your pet is going to encounter outside, you can keep the population down in the area around your house by using nematodes. These microscopic worms eat flea larvae (and reputedly ignore the "good" bugs) and are therefore a natural way to control the flea population. You can purchase nematodes at pet and garden stores.

Place them in moist, shady spots near your house; neither fleas nor nematodes survive in the hot sun. As nematodes multiply rapidly, you have only to introduce a small number to have the desired effect.

"Flea Away" may also be used outdoors. Apply on dry walks, dry decks, dry patios, dry lawns.

COMMERCIAL PRODUCTS

CAT PRODUCTS

Cat owners take special note: Not all essential oils are safe for cats, always read labels and look for the following ingredients. If you see them do not use on cats, pet cats immediately after using them on hands, spray them on carpets or walls where they might rub, or use them in diffusers in your home.

Cinnamon	Clove	Thyme	Oregano	Savory	Cajuput
Pine	Petergrain	Lemon	Lime	Orange	Grapefruit
Bergamot	Mandarin	Tangerine	Neroli	Fir	Cypress
Juniper	Spruce	Tea Tree	Birch	Bitter Almond	Boldo
Calamus	Camphor	Chenopodium	Garlic	Horseradish	Mustard
Tansy	Wintergreen	Peppermint	Sassafras	Rue	Melaleuca

Source: (meowlifestyle.com/6-essential-oil-safety-tips-for-cat-owners)

The use of these essential oils with cats is a potentially volatile combination. Cats do not efficiently metabolize essential oils and their use can lead to symptoms of toxicity. In addition to essential oils, cats have known metabolic sensitivities to certain herbal preparations and allopathic medications. Because the cat's body does

not efficiently excrete essential oils, they can build up to toxic levels. *Symptoms of toxicity include vomiting, dizziness, clumsiness, lack of appetite, lack of energy and shock.* In addition, cats have very thin, delicate skin. Essential oils are absorbed rapidly into their skin and enter the bloodstream, which can overwhelm their systems. Cats dislike strong odors and generally keep away from strong scents -- even highly diluted essential oils.

“Natural Animal” Essential Oil Flea Collars for Cats or Dogs / www.mountainroseherbs.com

Rechargeable fabric collar comes with a 0.5 oz concentrate bottle of all natural insect repellent made from pure essential oils. One size fits all, with a collar that is adjustable.

Repellent Contains: Essential oils of Citronella, Lemongrass, Cedar, and Rosemary in a base of Sesame oil.

“Nava Pets” Dry Flea & Tick Shampoo for Cats or Dogs / www.mountainroseherbs.com

Natural flea and tick treatment is made with botanical ingredients. The powder contains no harmful chemicals, no essential oils, and no artificial fragrances. Simply sprinkle a small amount of powder onto your pet, and gently massage into the fur and skin for deep penetration. Then brush or rub with a dry cloth to remove any excess powder. Ingredients for Cats: organic catnip, diatomaceous earth (food grade), organic arrowroot , and organic wheat grass.

“DERMagic” Organic Diatomaceous Earth / www.dermagic.com

(DERMagic products are available locally at Wags, Nature's Pet Mart, Bare Bones Dog Wash, or through us)

DERMagic's organic Diatomaceous Earth is made from 100% certified organic, food grade diatomaceous earth (DE), which contains no chemical pesticides but is very effective for your pets. It can be applied to the pet's bedding, carpet, furniture, and wherever your pet hangs out. You can even put it directly on your pet! Absolutely safe for dogs and cats.

DOG PRODUCTS

“DERMagic” Diatomaceous Earth Shampoo Bar (for dogs only) / www.dermagic.com

Combining this element with a proprietary blend of essential oils, bathing with the DERMagic DE Shampoo Bar provides an anti-microbial, calming and therapeutic effect for dogs with both dry and oily skin. And, it is completely safe, using no toxins, preservatives, chemical insecticides, sulfates or other irritants that can aggravate sensitive skin. *(Warning for cats: These shampoo bars contain essential oils which many cats may be sensitive to, so we only recommend them for dogs)*

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OTHER RESOURCES/BOOKS

“Keep Your Cat Healthy the Natural Way” Pat Lazarus

“Keep Your Dog Healthy the Natural Way” Pat Lazarus

“Keep Your Pet Healthy the Natural Way” Pat Lazarus

“Natural Healing for Dogs & Cats” Diane Stein