

Integrative Animal Care

3051 State Route 82
Ancramdale, NY 12503

What To Do About Fleas and Ticks

Fleas and ticks are external parasites that can cause discomfort to you and your pets. They can also spread diseases or internal parasites to you or your pet. In severe infestations, particularly in ill, old or very young pets, fleas can remove enough blood to cause illness just from the blood loss. In pets that are allergic to flea bites, a severe reaction can occur when your pet is bitten by just one flea. It can lead to excessive scratching and biting that can then cause inflammation and bacterial infections. If your pet ingests a flea while grooming, they can also then become infested with tapeworms.

Ticks spread many diseases including Lyme disease, anaplasma, and ehrlichiosis. These diseases can cause a great deal of discomfort and serious illness to you and your pet.

Prevention

Lawn and Yard Fleas will infest areas of lawn and gardens and are usually worst summer through fall. They live primarily in the environment and not on pets. To prevent fleas from infesting your yard, beneficial nematodes can be sprayed in your yard and garden in the spring after the last frost.

Nematodes are a natural flea predator and are available from many companies. Dr. Tina orders them from Arbico Organics. Their website is: <http://www.arbico-organics.com>. Or you can call 800-827-2847 to ask questions and place an order. Discouraging wildlife such as squirrels or mice from coming into the yard can help as well.

Keeping grass mowed short, leaf litter picked up and bushes trimmed back will help keep ticks from getting on your pet. Walking your dog in areas that don't have tall grass or brushy areas will also help.

Pets There are several things you can do to keep fleas and ticks off your pet. Herbal collars can be worn and should be changed every month or when they no longer have a fresh herbal smell.

Feeding brewer's yeast is another effective way to prevent flea infestation. Dogs and cats can have ¼ teaspoon for every 10 pounds of body weight added to their food twice daily. For example, if your dog weighs 50 pounds, give 1-1/4 teaspoons for breakfast and the same for dinner. Brewer's yeast may have traces of gluten so do not feed it if your pet is sensitive to gluten. In sensitive animals, it then may cause itchiness and diarrhea, so discontinue use if you see either of these signs. It also provides chromium, betaglucan and B vitamins.

Garlic can also be fed in moderate doses to ward off pests. The maximum amount to give is 1 whole clove for every 20 pounds of body weight, per day. It can be fed raw and pureed or it may be fed cooked.

Home To prevent an infestation of fleas in your home, using Borax in the late spring every year will help. Borax can be purchased at the clinic and in most grocery stores and is non-toxic. It is not a chemical or pesticide; it kills flea larvae by dehydrating them. To use, vacuum the entire house first. Put the Borax in a sieve and sift onto floor and carpets until you see a white layer. (You may want to test a small, hidden spot on your rugs first to check for color-fastness.) Brush the powder into cracks and crevices and under baseboards. Leave down as long as possible before vacuuming or mopping. You will need to reapply if you vacuum or mop. Borax takes many weeks or even several months to take effect.

☎ 518.329.5213 📠 518.329.0026
www.integrativeanimalcare.com
office@integrativeanimalcare.com

Integrative Animal Care

3051 State Route 82
Ancramdale, NY 12503

How Do I Know If My Pet Has Fleas or Ticks?

Ticks can be seen walking on lighter-coated pets. Once they have bitten and attached to your pet, you can see or feel a small bump on their skin. To remove the tick, grasp the tick, ideally with tweezers, and pull gently and steadily until it is removed. Do not twist when you pull and do not use soap, oil, or matches. Do not squeeze the tick as you remove it. The tick should be flushed down the toilet. (Wrapping it in toilet paper first will help it go down.) They can also be killed by placing them in a small container of rubbing alcohol. Sometimes, part of the tick will remain in the skin of your pet and the area may get a little reddened or swollen. This is normal and will heal on its own, but you can apply a little calendula gel or antibiotic cream.

If your pet is scratching a lot, they may have fleas. Adult fleas can be seen by parting the fur on the back near the hips and on the belly, but other stages of flea growth are hard to see. The flea dirt they leave behind is easier to detect. To check for dirt, moisten a piece of white paper or paper towel. Have your pet sit on the edge of the paper and brush their fur backwards near their hips with your hand over the paper. If you see small specks landing on the paper that dissolve into a red spot, that's flea dirt and you will need to treat all the pets in the house. Remember that fleas live primarily in the environment around your pet and for every one you see on your pet there are at least another ninety-nine off the pet, so you will have to treat your home as well.

Treating Your Pets

There are several ways you can treat your pet for fleas and ticks. First, you can bathe them using Dawn dish soap. Make lots of suds and work it down to the skin. Leave on for a few minutes, or as long as possible. Rinse thoroughly.

After bathing, you can apply a topical pesticide: Vectra3D for dogs or Vectra for cats. **It's very important not to use the dog product on cats.** To apply, holding the applicator tube upright, press the two disks on the applicator until both disks meet, piercing the seal. Using the applicator tip, part the fur at the base of the tail and begin applying the product onto the skin (not on the fur) in a continuous line from the base of the tail along the center of the back all the way up to the shoulder blades, squeezing the applicator tube until it's empty. It may be easier to apply the product on to 2-3 spots on the skin of the back rather than applying it in a continuous line.

Capstar is a safe oral tablet that can be used to kill fleas on your pet. The tablets can be given every other day until the fleas are under control, and then reduced to every 3-4 days. Keep in mind that the tablets kill only the fleas on your pet at the time you give the medication. If more fleas jump on the next day, more doses will need to be given. That is why it's important to treat the environment (your yard and home) as well.

The Seresto collar will kill fleas and repels and kills ticks for eight months. It can be worn by dogs that swim and does not need to be removed although its effective life will be shortened by a couple of months. These collars have a safety mechanism built in which allows them to expand with a hard pull and will break if a stronger pull is applied to them.