

# Flea and Tick Control Recommendations

## NATURAL CHOICES TO PREVENT FLEAS

### Quality nutrition and good grooming

are the *most* important elements for proper flea and tick control. Animals that are clean, with no mats, and who have healthy skin and coats have *less* problems with fleas and ticks. Ask us for our list of premium foods or for an appointment to outline a homemade diet recipe tailored to the needs of your animal friend.

- **Fleas Flee**, a powder based on yeast, liver and garlic, is added to food and works well to prevent flea infestations. Use from May through October.
- **Herbal pet powders** are especially useful for treating flea infestations in the very young or debilitated animal, when chemicals are especially dangerous.
- **Herbal Pet Collars** These have some repellent qualities, but will not eliminate fleas by themselves. They do have a very nice herbal aroma that keeps your pet smelling wonderful! (always trim excess length from collars so animal will not chew)
- **Frequent vacuuming** in the Summer and Fall months help to prevent or treat a flea infestation. Tiny eggs are dropped by fleas as you pet moves around the house. Be sure to vacuum between furniture cushions and underneath furnishings.
- **Bathing** with a quality herbal shampoo is a great way to remove fleas once they are on an animal. The shampoo should be left on for 10 mins. This will stun the fleas, and then they can be rinsed and combed away.

## NATURAL CHOICES TO PREVENT TICKS

Unfortunately, there is no natural method that will completely eliminate tick bites if your animal goes outdoors. The following suggestions are helpful:

- **Essential Oil sprays**, such as "*tick guard*" may be sprayed on dogs to help to repel ticks, it must be applied to legs and neck daily or can be used just prior to outings in a tick infested area.  
\*\*\* These sprays are **not for cats!**
- **Picking ticks off by hand** after and during any outdoor activity will greatly reduce the risk of tick born diseases. Daily tick checks and manual removal of any ticks found should be performed, just as we would do for ourselves or children. Be sure to check around eyes, ears, neck and armpits.
- Tick pulling devices or fine tweezers are better than hands. Sticky soft tape works best for the tiny nymph ticks, especially around the eyes. A sticky material like duct tape or a pet hair roller (designed for cleaning clothing) can be used routinely after and occasionally during outings, to collect ticks before they attach. After removing ticks, they can be folded into a piece of tape and placed in garbage. (flushing in toilets is acceptable, but a big waste of water!) Be sure to wash your hands afterwards, and you may want to put some antibiotic ointment on the tick bites.
- **Fleas Flee** used at a double dose may be helpful in reducing the number of tick bites.

## CHEMICALS FOR FLEA AND TICK CONTROL

All of the commercially available flea and tick chemical treatments have potential toxic effects to both pets and people. Be sure to follow all package directions carefully!

Never use the chemicals on old or debilitated animals, and use in moderation if at all, on healthy animals. (see cautions on overleaf)

- **Advantage®** (listed as a “potential carcinogen” by the EPA) usually works at ½ the recommended dose, but we won’t “guarantee” this. Does not kill ticks, but very effective to eliminate fleas.
- **Frontline®** (listed as a “potential carcinogen” by the EPA) is effective in killing ticks, but they do need to attach and bite, then they slowly die. Fleas are also killed by Frontline, though some have become resistant to it. The package recommends monthly treatments for ticks, however, since ticks are seasonal and dependent on weather conditions, we recommend that it be reapplied after 30 days, only if and when ticks are seen.
- **Flea and tick collars** don’t work for fleas, but do help kill and repel ticks. These do expose the animals to a *known* carcinogen and neurotoxin: permethrin. (The better ones, “Zodiac” or “VetKem” do kill ticks well on cats, so *may* be OK for cats that aren’t cuddled a lot by people, especially children)

### SOME CAUTIONS:

- ❖ All of the chemicals available are listed by the EPA as either known or potential carcinogens. Some are also neurotoxic or can cause skin sensitivity. No longterm toxicity studies have been done on these products.
- ❖ None have ever been approved for use on humans, in fact, the label instructions imply that it is dangerous to come into contact with them. Why then, would you want to put them on your animal?

**We strongly recommend that these chemical treatments be used in moderation, if at all.**

**Only when** fleas and ticks are *seen*. (not as a preventative) Only reapply if 30 days have passed, AND the new fleas or ticks are appearing on the animal.

Fleas are generally a problem only in late summer and fall and are not present *everywhere*. Ticks are the worst in the spring and fall seasons and also occur in “patches” in the environment. These patches can be different every year.

- **Old or sick animals** should not have any chemical preventatives used on them. It is safest to use only the shampoo and powder. Any other animals in the house can be treated and the home should be vacuumed thoroughly and regularly.
- **If children live in the household**, any chemical preventative should be applied in the evening after the children are in bed. This minimizes or eliminates the danger of them touching the wet chemicals. Children should be advised not to touch the neck of the pet for at least 2 *days*.

### Application of Advantage and Frontline:

- Always read package instructions carefully!!
- Apply chemicals to the neck:- ½ way between the top of the head and the collar level
- ***Collars or harnesses*** should be removed prior to application of any chemical, or the chemical may concentrate in the collar and be a constant source of exposure to persons hugging the pet.

