

Fleas and ticks are virtually everywhere. Although they're a bigger problem in certain parts of the country and at specific times during the year, no cat or dog is completely safe from them.

Fortunately, many safe and highly effective products are available. And today, there's no reason for any pet or owner to be bothered by these pests.



### The key facts you should know are:

- Even if you keep your pet completely indoors, fleas and ticks can still be carried inside your home by other pets or on your clothing.
- The best and safest flea and tick preventive products are available only from your veterinarian.
- For flea and tick control to be effective, it must be administered throughout the entire flea and tick season.

## Q & A

### Why are fleas so common?

Fleas are reproductive marvels. A single female flea can lay as many as 30 eggs a day and can live and breed on your pet for up to 100 days. The eggs then fall and land in carpets and upholstery, where they can lie dormant for up to 8 months.

### Where are fleas and ticks most prevalent?

In the warmer, more humid southern states, fleas can be a problem year round. Even in cooler temperatures, however, fleas can be a problem indoors well after the first frost.

Ticks tend to emerge seasonally in large numbers, so it is not uncommon for pets to be exposed to dozens or even hundreds of ticks from a single location.

### How can I flea-proof my home?

Regularly vacuum carpets, furniture, floors, and areas where your pet sits or sleeps. You should also wash your pet's bedding, toys, and towels once a week, and regularly groom your pet.

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VCA 1570C



# Flea and Tick Control

How to keep pests away from your pet



# Fleas and Ticks:



## Potentially dangerous...

### The risks to your pet—and you

Beyond causing serious discomfort, fleas and ticks can carry diseases dangerous to both you and your pet.

Fleas can carry tapeworm larvae, which your pet can ingest. In cats, in particular, fleas can carry an organism called *Bartonella henselae*, which is one of the causes of cat-scratch disease in humans. Ticks can transmit such serious diseases as Lyme disease, ehrlichiosis, and Rocky Mountain spotted fever to both you and your pet.

Many pets are also so allergic to fleabites that a single bite can cause an intense allergic reaction. When the skin is irritated or inflamed, it can also become infected with bacteria or other pathogens, making the problem worse.

Ticks can be a particular problem when present in large numbers, or when they attach in sensitive places, like inside the ear or near an eye.

## ...but completely preventable

### Cutting Edge Treatments

Thankfully, your VCA veterinarian has many tools in his or her arsenal that can keep you and your pet safe from fleas and ticks. They're applied topically or in pill form on a monthly basis. Many veterinarians recommend year-round treatment for best effect.

Your veterinarian will recommend treatments based on the area you and your pet live in, your daily routine, and any pre-existing medical conditions.



*Enlarged photos of a flea (top) and a tick (bottom).*

### Fleas and Ticks on Cats vs. Dogs

- Ticks are more often found on dogs than cats.
- Dogs are more prone to flea allergies.
- Owners often miss signs of fleas in cats because they mistake the cat's discomfort for normal grooming behavior.
- Fleas typically bug dogs on the rump, thighs, and stomach; cats are often more affected on the face, neck, and back.
- Very important! Be sure that you always use only cat products on cats and dog products on dogs.



## How to tell if your pet has fleas

Even if you've never seen a flea on your pet, he or she can still have them. Here are some ways to check for these elusive pests.

- **Scratching.** Even occasional itching can be a sign of fleas.
- **Irritated skin.** Redness or oozing can be signs of flea allergy dermatitis.
- **Visible fleas.** Check your pet's skin and haircoat regularly. You may be able to spot fleas, especially on a lighter-skinned pet.
- **Tiny black dots.** Groom your pet with a flea comb. If you see little black dots on the comb, it might be flea dirt (a.k.a. flea excrement). To make sure, clean it off with a white paper towel and add water. If the dots dissolve into tiny red or brown stains, you've got fleas.
- **Small bites on yourself.** If you notice these, especially around the ankles, you could have fleabites!

### VCA Pet Tips:

- 1 Be sure to eliminate fleas on all your pets, including ferrets, guinea pigs, and gerbils. Your VCA veterinarian can advise you.
- 2 Look out for opossums, raccoons, mice, or other animals that are visiting your yard, deck, porch areas, etc. You can bet they are leaving fleas behind.