



HOW TO PREVENT AND TREAT FLEAS ON YOUR DOG

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THE ISSUE

Fleas are a biting parasite best known for causing itching and scratching in your pets, but they can also transmit parasites of their own, such as tapeworms. The reason fleas are so notoriously hard to eliminate is due to their life cycle, which can last two weeks or as long as a year depending on environmental conditions. That's why prevention is so important. Using natural methods regularly can reduce the need to use strong chemical pesticides.

What is Flea Allergy Dermatitis? One in four dogs has flea allergy dermatitis (FAD), which is an allergy to flea saliva that causes intense itching and discomfort for up to two weeks after a single flea bite. For dogs with FAD, it may make sense to offer them the most protection by using a chemical treatment.

WHEN TO CONTACT YOUR VETERINARIAN

Signs of a serious reaction to flea treatments include **lethargy, uncoordinated movement, vomiting, diarrhea, trembling, weakness, hair loss, excessive itching and foaming at the mouth**. The presence of any of these serious symptoms in your dog or any other pet within your household indicates a life-threatening emergency, and you should **call your veterinarian immediately**. If you can't reach a veterinarian immediately, the **Animal Poison Control at (888) 426-4435** can offer advice. Bathe your dog with dish soap to strip the flea product from their skin while you wait for further instructions from the hotline.

CONSIDER THE RIGHT SOLUTION FOR YOUR INDIVIDUAL DOG, HOUSEHOLD AND LIFESTYLE

Consider starting with natural products, such as a repellent spray and flea shampoo, for households where you prioritize using natural products, if your dog might be affected by chemical flea treatments, or if you want to avoid exposing your household to the negative effects of chemical treatments.

Consider chemical flea control methods, such as a topical pesticide or tablet, when your dog has FAD, if you suspect a flea infestation, or if natural methods aren't practical for your household's needs. You can also use a combined approach, where you limit the use of chemical flea controls and supplement with natural methods.

Cats are very sensitive to natural and chemical flea treatments. Never use a flea treatment for a dog on a cat—doing so could create a life-threatening emergency. Instead, read labels carefully and apply only species-appropriate flea treatments to your pets. Small animals and other exotics can also be affected by flea treatments. Please consult your vet if these pets are part of your household.

NATURAL FLEA TREATMENT STEP 1: Remove fleas on your dog

- **Bathe to remove and repel fleas.** Soapy water drowns adult fleas and helps remove eggs. Fleas hide in unwashed areas, so wash every part of your dog including their head. Bathe once a month with a naturally flea-repellent shampoo. Consider Wondercide's Flea & Tick Bar or Mad About Organics Flea & Tick Shampoo.
- **Remove and check for fleas with a comb.** Check your dog every few days for fleas with a flea comb. Check your dog's entire body, but focus on the area around the tail where fleas often congregate. Drown any fleas you catch by dipping your comb into warm soapy water. Regular checks will help you catch problems early.

NATURAL FLEA TREATMENT STEP 2: Eliminate and repel fleas from your home

- **Vacuum frequently.** Vacuuming eliminates fleas in every life stage and removes food for larvae. Every few days, vacuum your household and focus on your dog's favorite areas. A chemical flea collar in your vacuum cleaner bag/ canister kills trapped fleas or empty your vacuum outside your home immediately after cleaning.
- **Wash and dry bedding, clothing, and toys.** Drown adult fleas by washing in warm water with soap and use your dryer on

high heat to kill every life stage of flea. Spray clean dog bedding and clothing with your natural flea repellent of choice.

- **Treat your home and yard with diatomaceous earth.** This natural desiccant kills fleas through dehydration. Wear a mask, and then sprinkle it in carpets, furniture, your dog's favorite sleeping spots, and in hard-to-reach places like baseboards and corners. If dust is visible in the air, leave your living space with your pets for at least an hour until it settles.

NATURAL FLEA TREATMENT STEP 3: Repel fleas to prevent further issues

- **Use a natural flea repellent product.** Use a natural flea repellent product. During flea season, use a flea repellent that includes cedar, citronella, or geraniol every two to three days or as indicated on the label. Consider Wondercide's Flea & Tick Spray or Mad About Organics Flea & Tick Topical Treatment.
- **Try a supplement to repel fleas.** Dogs who are sensitive to fleas or regularly exposed to them may benefit from a daily supplement made to improve your pet's immune health and repel fleas naturally. Households that want year-round natural flea deterrence can also benefit from them. Consider Earth Animal Yeast-Free Daily or Earth Animal Daily Internal Powder.

CHEMICAL FLEA TREATMENT AND REMOVAL: Choosing the right pesticide

Most healthy adult dogs can use flea products safely. Consult your veterinarian if you have puppies, senior dogs or dogs who take medication or have chronic health conditions. Veterinarians can recommend specific products that match your dog's particular needs and can recommend prescription medication when appropriate. Mud Bay has also carefully chosen the following options for their safety record and efficacy against fleas.

CONSIDER Firstect Plus: Fipronil and s-methoprene products are a spot-on liquid that kills fleas and ticks. Products that contain these active ingredients are waterproof after three days. Wait to apply them until more than 24 hours after a bath, and don't bathe your dog more than once a week when using these products. This product is safe for pregnant or lactating dogs, as well as dogs as young as eight weeks old.

CONSIDER Capstar: Nitenpyram is an over-the-counter oral tablet that can be used in animals as young as four weeks old (and over 2 lbs). Each tablet is only effective for 24 hours, so we don't usually recommend them for dogs with FAD or to treat household flea infestations. This product is a good option for your dog or any new dog who enters your home after spending time somewhere that fleas are often found. **Owners who prefer tablets over spot-on flea treatments can ask their vet for other longer-lasting oral medications for their dog.**

PREVENTING FLEAS AND REDUCING THE NEED FOR STRONG REPELLENTS AND TREATMENTS

Strengthen your dog's skin to reduce secondary problems caused by fleas while making your pet a less attractive host.

- **Choose a diet that aids skin and coat health.** Raw diets can improve your dog's skin and coat health, making them less attractive to fleas. Even a partial raw diet can improve a dog's overall health while reducing their flea vulnerability.
- **Add an essential fatty acid supplement.** Consider adding Mud Bay Salmon/Pollock Oil, Ultra Oil, or Super Snouts Green Lipped Mussel to improve your dog's skin, coat and overall health.
- **Relieve any itchy skin.** Try a natural anti-itch product such as Mad About Organics Skin and Itch Relief, Farm Dog Naturals Restore Salve, Mystic Roots Skin Stick and Shake Skin Spritz to resolve immediate problems and flare-ups. Pair with an herbal supplement that contains natural anti-itch compounds like Animal Essentials Seasonal Allergy, InClover BioResilient, and Herbsmith Clear AllerQi for long-term care.

Still have questions? Talk to a Muddy in any of our stores or chat with an expert online at mudbay.com.

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