Flea and Tick: Create a Total Control System

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Have you spotted a flea on your cat? Unfortunately, fleas are not solitary creatures. In fact, for every flea you find on your cat there are likely to be hundreds of eggs and larvae around your home. Therefore, control of fleas and their parasite counterparts, ticks, is a multi-step process that includes treating both your pet and her environment. Thankfully, creating a total flea and tick control system is simple.

THREE STEPS TO A FLEA- AND TICK-FREE HOME

Adult fleas spend most of their time on your cat. But flea eggs, larvae, and pupae thrive in carpeting, rugs, bedding, and outdoor grass. Ticks, on the other hand, may be found on your cat in the larvae, nymph, and adult stage with eggs tending to develop under leaf cover outdoors. As such, a truly effective flea and tick control program includes three essential steps:

CAT FLEA & TICK CONTROL

Fleas and ticks seek your cat for nourishment. Therefore, control of these parasites on your cat is vital. There are a number of suitable flea and tick control products available, each in a variety of forms to suit your needs and preference. Some of the more popular forms of flea and tick control products include:

MONTHLY TOPICALS - such as Advantage® for Cats applied to a small area on your cat's back. Most cat owners consider this form of flea and tick control the easiest to use. Topicals generally offer the longest lasting flea and tick control of all styles of protection.

SPRAYS - are applied over all parts of your cat's body. Care needs to be taken to prevent the spray from getting into the eyes or ears.

SHAMPOOS - such as Doctors Foster and Smith Advanced Formula Flea & Tick Shampoo for Cats are lathered into the coat all over the body. These primarily help rid your cat of fleas and ticks she already has, although some residual prevention is also offered.

COLLARS - bioSpot collars are convenient for you and your cat and easy to apply.

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ORAL LIQUIDS - are simply added monthly to your cat's food. Most, however, are insect development inhibitors that help control juvenile stages of fleas only. Therefore, an additional product is needed to kill adult fleas and ticks for maximum protection.

INDOOR FLEA & TICK CONTROL

Indoor control of fleas and ticks involves mechanically removing all stages of fleas and ticks, killing remaining adults, and preventing development of immature forms. To do so:

Vacuum daily in high traffic areas, weekly throughout the rest of your home.

Use a carpet powder or fogger, such as those found in the bioSpot Home Protection Kit, to kill remaining adults and stop the development of eggs and larvae.

Wash your pet's bedding, plush toys, and other accessories weekly.

Clean and treat pet carriers, your basement, and any other place your cat frequents.

OUTDOOR FLEA & TICK CONTROL

Even if your cat never goes outside, outdoor flea and tick control is important to prevent these pests from sneaking into your home. Fleas and ticks prefer moist, warm, and shaded areas ripe with organic debris. Therefore, it is important you frequently remove leaves, grass clippings, hay, and fallen tree branches from your yard. In winter, clear snow away from areas surrounding doors and windows. Otherwise, the spring melt may create the moist, debris-filled areas fleas and ticks desire.

Keep in mind, however, that an effective flea and tick control program takes time to work. These parasites are prolific. In addition, insecticides and insect growth inhibitors only target specific stages of the parasite life cycle. Therefore, it can take up to six months or longer to make your cat - and home - completely flea and tick free.

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