Flea/Tick Topical & Oral Buyer's Guide

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

While a number of flea and tick prevention options are available to pet owners today, the vast majority choose to protect their pets with monthly spot-on topicals, or with oral tablets. The tremendous popularity of these products is primarily due to their convenience and effectiveness. For example, a simple one-minute application of K9 Advantix® provides your dog with complete flea, tick, and mosquito protection for a full month. Following is a brief description of the topical and oral flea and tick preventives available.

K9 Advantix® for Dogs

K9 Advantix, a relatively new innovation in flea and tick protection for dogs, combines *imidacloprid* plus *permethrin* for total once-a-month topical protection from fleas, ticks, and mosquitoes. In addition to killing flea larvae, K9 Advantix kills adult fleas before they can lay eggs, and stops them from biting within 5 minutes of application. K9 Advantix is also effective on ticks - repelling and killing up to 98.5% of them before they can attach. Mosquitoes are also no match for K9 Advantix; it repels and kills them before they can bite. This topical treatment, available for various sizes of dogs, is excellent for dogs who love to swim, and those who require frequent bathing - it resists water and can be effective up to six weeks. K9 Advantix is designed for dogs only, and SHOULD NEVER BE USED ON CATS.

Advantage®

Advantage is an excellent product to use in situations where the focus is on flea control alone. While it is not designed to kill ticks, Advantage kills adult fleas rapidly and also kills flea larvae in only 20 minutes, preventing them from developing and reproducing. Because Advantage is water-resistant, this is another good product for water dogs.

bioSpot SPOT ON® for Dogs

bioSpot SPOT ON for Dogs is an excellent spot-on flea and tick preventive that offers complete protection against all stages of the flea life cycle. In addition, bioSpot SPOT ON® for Dogs effectively kills and repels ticks (carriers of Lyme disease), and also repels mosquitoes (potential carriers of Heartworm and West Nile Virus). What we like most about bioSpot SPOT ON® - besides the fact that it provides such complete protection - is that it is significantly less expensive than other alternatives. This is one example where you get a lot more than you pay for.

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Frontline® Plus

Frontline Plus is a well-known, highly effective flea and tick preventive with a high margin of safety. Frontline Plus kills ticks (carriers of Lyme disease) and adult fleas for a full month. Frontline Plus also contains an insect growth regulator (IGR), which prevents flea eggs and larvae from developing. Frontline Plus provides water-proof protection, making it the perfect choice for dogs that swim or are bathed frequently.

Capstar®

Capstar is another oral flea product, fast acting, and starts killing adult fleas on your dog in 30 minutes. Available in tablet form, one dose lasts for only 24 hours and is especially useful in situations where pets are more likely to be exposed to fleas, such as in dog parks or at shows. May also be used prior to surgery, boarding, or grooming.

When to START and END flea prevention

The time to start your flea prevention program depends on where you live. In the Midwest and north, we recommend starting your pet on a prevention program in early March and stopping after the first hard frost. In warmer climates, such as in the South, use flea prevention year round. Talk to your veterinarian if you're not sure if you should use flea prevention throughout the year.

Products such as flea and tick collars, shampoos, and sprays can be used with oral or topical solutions to ensure your pet, your home, and your yard remain flea and tick free. In areas where tick infestation is heavy, for instance, the Preventic Tick Collar can be used to protect your pet from transmission of tick-borne illnesses and flea infestations, or environmental products such as sprays can be used to eliminate fleas and ticks indoors. Other products, like lawn sprays, can be used to eliminate fleas outdoors where they live. Before using more than one flea and tick product on your pet, refer to our Flea & Tick Product Compatibility Chart and speak with your veterinarian.

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