

## Why Cats Should Only Use Cat Flea & Tick Control

*Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff*

Topical flea products (like Bio Spot, Advantage or Frontline) are very popular with pet owners because they are easy to apply and you don't have to worry about fleas for weeks at a time. Ingredients in these products range from fipronil, imidacloprid, pyrethrins, and for dogs, a high concentration (sometimes between 45% and 65%) of a synthetic form of pyrethrin called "permethrin."



Products containing some of these ingredients or a higher concentration and labeled "for dogs only" should never be used on cats. Cats have a very sensitive metabolism, so using these products on cats or even allowing your cat close contact with a dog that has been recently treated should be avoided. Although their margin of safety is very high for dogs, this is not true for cats. They can develop life-threatening toxicities.

Cats with permethrin toxicity can develop severe muscle tremors, seizures, aggression, and then eventually death. Seek veterinary help immediately if you see any signs, symptoms, or abnormal behavior. Your veterinarian may provide medication to reverse the toxic effects, decontaminate the cat by washing her and, if necessary, give intravenous fluids (which will require a hospital stay).

Some tips on using flea products responsibly:

- Always read and follow label directions completely. Some flea products should not be used on young kittens, pregnant queens, and elderly or sick cats without consulting your veterinarian.
- When using a [fogger or home premise spray](#) make sure to remove all pets, their food and their water dishes from the area for the time period on the label.
- Observe your cat closely after using [cat flea products](#). Some cats are more sensitive than others.
- If you are uncertain about the usage of any product, contact the manufacturer before you use the product. You may also contact our knowledgeable phone staff.

[Topical and oral flea products](#) are a boon to busy pet owners, but make sure you use them correctly.