

FLEAS

Fleas and ticks are prevalent in our area and throughout the Midwest for much of the year. Fleas can be challenging to treat in a household, especially when the problem has persisted for an extended period of time. When fleas have been in a household for several months, it is likely that the house is infested with all the life stages of the parasite. Therefore, using a pet product that kills all the stages of the flea life cycle on EVERY pet in the household is imperative.

Dogs:

- First, monthly (every 4 weeks) prevention with a topical insecticide such as **Frontline-Gold** is highly recommended year round. In cases of heavy infestation, topical treatment can be applied every 3 weeks.
- Second, the addition of a systemic product, such as *Spinosad*, kills live fleas within 2-4 hours and continues to provide protection for a full month. For dogs, *Spinosad* is in **Trifexis**[®] which is a combination medication for heartworm prevention and flea prevention. Trifexis[®] is given orally once a month. **Trifexis**[®] can be safely administered with **Frontline Gold**.
- Third, **Capstar**[®] (*Nitenpyram*) is an oral tablet that will kill all the adult fleas currently on your pet but only lasts 24 hours.

Cats:

- First, monthly (every 4 weeks) prevention with a topical insecticide such as **Frontline-Gold** or **Revolution**[®] is highly recommended. In cases of heavy infestation, topical medication can be applied every 3 weeks. Cats that go outside should be on preventative year round.
- In addition, **Capstar**[®] (*Nitenpyram*) is an oral tablet that will kill all the adult fleas currently on your pet but only lasts 24 hours.
- Alternately, *Lufenuron* is an injection called **Program**[®] which can be administered every 6 months. *Lufenuron* only inhibits egg production but does not kill the adult fleas.

Rabbits, Guinea Pigs, Ferrets:

- **Revolution**[®] monthly is recommended for the prevention/treatment of fleas, mites and lice.
WARNING: other topical flea products are potentially toxic to these species!

If you are having difficulty getting rid of fleas on your pets, a multimodal approach is usually required in addition to the topical and systemic treatments listed above.

Environment:

- Treating the environment will help reduce the flea population in the house. **Wash all bedding** with which the animals come into contact. **Vacuum often** and discard the bag or clean the canister each time. Household treatments, such as **sprays and foggers**, should contain *insect growth regulator* (IGR) and adulticide ingredients that will kill multiple life stages. Household treatments will need to be repeated multiple times according to the manufacturer's instructions. This can be done with either an over-the-counter product (**Bayer Advantage or Adams Plus Carpet or Household Spray**) or by hiring a professional exterminator.
- Treating the yard with a product such as **Seven Dust**[®] or **Bayer Complete Insect Killer**[®] can also be beneficial. Follow all manufacturer instructions to prevent human and animal injury or sickness when using these products.

Complications of Fleas:

- Tapeworms – an intestinal parasite which your pet is potentially exposed to by swallowing a flea
- Allergic Reaction – itching, hives or scabs
- Skin Infection – which can require medical treatment if severe