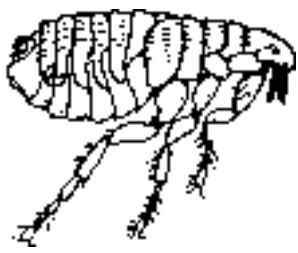


Prevent Fleas Now!



There are more effective treatment approaches to flea control than ever before. Some treatments work to prevent flea infestations from ever getting started, but the key is to start the treatment before the animal gets fleas.

Fleas are small dark brown insects with hard and compressed bodies that jump from host to host. Female fleas require blood to lay eggs and are quite prolific; a single female flea can lay up to 800 eggs in five months. Eggs usually fall from the animal into carpets and cracks, where they hatch into worm-like larvae that feed on organic matter and dried blood. Because flea adults and larvae live in different locations, getting a flea infestation under control can be difficult. Effective treatment includes treating the animal, the house, and the outdoor environment.

It is now possible to completely prevent fleas by treating your pet with some of the prescription products that have become available in the last several years. Prevention is only possible if these treatments are used before the flea season begins.

A prescription product that is new for the 2000 flea season

is Revolution/selamectin. This product provides protection for cats and dogs against fleas, flea eggs, ticks and mites, internal parasites like heartworm and roundworms. It is a monthly topical treatment that is applied to the skin at the base of the neck in front of the shoulder blades. It kills adult fleas.

Program/lufenuron, is a pill for dogs or a liquid suspension for cats, that offers complete flea prevention for an entire season when animals are treated before the flea season begins. For complete prevention, all cats and dogs in a household should be treated. One limitation with Program is that it does not kill adult fleas; it acts by causing flea eggs to be infertile. In the case of a serious flea infestation, Program, used alone, may take a month or more to control the flea population. Another prescription medication called Sentinel, is a once-a-month pill that contains Program (for fleas) along with a medication that controls heartworm and roundworms.

Another product is Frontline/fipronil. This product kills fleas for up to three months on dogs and a month or more on cats. The pre-measured dosage is administered in a plastic pipette in a spot between the pet's shoulder blades.

Advantage/imidacloprid kills 98 to 100 percent of adult fleas within 24 hours before they can lay eggs. It is applied to the skin over the back so it can diffuse to the rest of the body. One dose lasts four weeks

on dogs and up to four weeks on cats. One disadvantage is the skin may get greasy for a few days at the application site.

Insecticidal shampoos and powders will help get rid of fleas. Flea shampoos remove the fleas present on the animal at the time of shampooing, but will not prevent reinfestations. They need to be applied repeatedly and used as directed on the label. If you are unsure as to whether a product is safe for your pet, be sure to contact your veterinarian.

Flea collars, according to Consumer Reports, August 1991, are ineffective and probably a waste of money.

Once a flea infestation gets started, it can take a major effort to bring it under control. Actions include vacuuming and steam cleaning carpets, washing pet bedding, and, if the pet sleeps with family members, all bedding must be washed. Spray treatments can be used in carpets to control flea larvae. Recommended products are those that contain insect growth regulators because they are safe and effective, preventing eggs from hatching and flea larvae from developing into adults. If your animal spends anytime outside, it may be reinfested by adult fleas. This might require an outdoor treatment, although several of the prescription products, mentioned above, will kill adult fleas on your pet and may handle reinfestations just as well, or better than outdoor treatments. (BPO)

It's Tick Season

Camping, fishing, hiking, gardening, watching the kids play soccer—no one is immune from tick bites. However, there are some things you can do to help keep your family safe. Here are some tips to reduce your exposure to ticks:

1. **Cultural.** Keep grassy and weedy areas trimmed to reduce harborage for tick hosts. The reservoir tick host that carries Lyme disease is the white-footed mouse (deer mouse).

2. **Avoidance.** Whenever possible, stay out of tick-infested areas, grassy pastures, prairies, and wooded areas. Restrict movement of your dog.

3. **Proper Clothing.** When entering tick-infested areas, wear long-sleeved shirts and long trousers with tight-fitting cuffs. Wear light-colored clothing. Ticks are easier to see on a light background.

4. **Repellents.** Use an insect repellent containing the active ingredient diethyl toluamide (DEET). Apply to clothing and areas of exposed skin such as hands, wrists, ankles, and neck. Protect dogs with flea and tick control products (talk to your veterinarian). Be sure to read and follow label directions.

5. **Inspection and Removal.** Inspection and removal

of ticks reduces the risk of Lyme disease transmission. After crawling on a potential host, a tick may take up to a day to attach and feed, so you may be able to remove a tick before it has attached. In addition, the risk of disease transmission is related to the length of feeding so attached ticks should be removed promptly. Ticks tend to concentrate on the head, shoulders, neck and in ear canals. Remove embedded ticks with forceps, by gripping the tick carefully at the point of attachment and pulling upward in a slow but firm manner. Care should be taken when removing a tick from pets or humans to insure that the entire tick is completely removed from the skin (the head often breaks off). After removal, wash the wound with soap and water and apply alcohol or some other disinfectant to help prevent infection.

6. **Insecticides.** Around the outside of the home, tick numbers can be reduced by using residual insecticides such as carbaryl (Sevin®),

chlorpyrifos (Dursban®), and diazinon. Follow label instructions. For tick control on pets, use only baths, sprays, and dips that are recommended by your veterinarian.

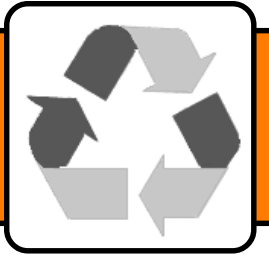
To check for ticks in your yard or acreage, you can drag a white cloth (such as an old pillowcase) through the vegetation as you walk. Ticks, waiting at the top of a blade of grass or shrub for a passing host to wander by, will grab hold of the cloth and be easy to see against the white background.

For more information on ticks and Lyme Disease, call 441-7180 and ask for Lyme Disease and Tick Management fact sheet (001-95). Or, visit our website at www.lanco.unl.edu/enviro (SC)



Female American Dog Tick
Photo by Jim Kalisch, UNL Entomology

Environmental Focus



Warm Weather is Here!

Swarming ants and termites, rabbits in the petunias, Robins beating themselves silly on the window, moths in the kitchen, and snakes on the stoop?

Help is available 24 hours a day/7 days a week on our pest and wildlife website via your computer. We have a "one-stop-pest and wildlife shop" with links to University of Nebraska publications, on-line manuals and Nufacts audio messages. We have also added many "printer-friendly" versions to our extensive list of in-house fact sheets.

Follow the pest and wildlife link at www.lanco.unl.edu/enviro

You'll find information on antlions, ant control, ant baits,

carpenter ants, aquatic insects, bees and wasp, fabric pests, pantry pests, centipedes, millipedes, cockroaches, crickets, earthworms, fleas, flies and gnats, mosquitos and midges, grasshoppers, head lice, house dust mites, chiggers, clover mites, Lyme disease and ticks, scabies, spiders (wolf, brown recluse, black widow, sac, parson), pest-proofing, silverfish and firebrats, termites and much more. You'll also find information on attracting wildlife, bats, bird feeding, bird habitat and houses, nuisance birds (grackles, starlings, pigeons, swallows, woodpeckers, birds banging into windows, and more), mice and rodents, rabbits, skunks, squirrels, snakes, voles.

These sites are updated often—so bookmark us and check back. (SC)

Water for the birds

When people are thirsty, they can seek something to drink from the nearest water faucet or refrigerator. Birds do not have that luxury. They must rely on nature or people to provide water for them.

Bird baths come in a variety of sizes, shapes, and prices. They range from the very ornate to a simple garbage can lid. They may be purchased at most lawn and garden stores or be made at home with a variety of materials. Terra-cotta saucers used under large plants make excellent bird baths. A garbage can lid with a few stones placed inside also can be used. Whether you decide to purchase your bird bath or make it from items found at home, follow these guidelines for success.

Depth: Bird baths should be no deeper than three inches at the deepest point and should have sloping sides down to this point. An edge along the top

will provide a place for birds to perch while taking a drink.

Surface: The surface of the bath should be rough so that birds can maintain sure footing. Pebbles, stone and concrete all provide the needed traction. Plastic is generally too slippery.

Height: Bird baths may be placed on the ground, on a raised pedestal, or hung from a branch a few feet off the ground. Ground level baths have the added benefit of providing water for many small mammals such as squirrels, chipmunks, and rabbits. However, bathing birds are extremely vulnerable to predators. If cats are in or around your yard, your bird bath should be raised above the ground.

Dripping Water: Nothing attracts birds as quickly as dripping water. Some bird baths have fountains, but a water drip can be made easily. Take a bucket, large jug, or can and

See **BIRDS** on page 11

Diagnostic Help Available

Do you have an insect you can't identify? Or maybe a piece of wood with insect damage on it? Collect your insect and put it in a container labeled with your name, address, and phone number. The insects do not have to be alive, but they should not be squashed. Then, bring your specimen to the extension office

between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., week days.

Diagnostic services are provided at no charge. (SC)

