



Fleas are parasites that feed on humans and other warm-blooded animals. Fleas prefer to feed on nonhumans. Fleas usually require warm and humid conditions to develop. A flea can jump 7 to 8 inches vertically and 14 to 16 inches horizontally.

- When a flea infestation is discovered, putting the pet outside is not a solution. The hungry fleas will direct all of their attention to the human hosts.
- The cat flea is the most common type of flea. It feeds on dogs and humans also.

Flea infestations cannot only be pesky and annoying but can also have deadly consequences for pets. We visited a home recently where several pets have died due to flea anemia. Humans are often embarrassed about fleas so wait until the problem is overwhelming before seeking help. Fleas are equal opportunity pests and can impact any family and their pets.

Obviously, the best way to beat the possibility of having a flea infestation is to preventatively treat pets with flea meds from your veterinarian every month. **A single dose of flea med for a cat or dog is typically less than \$20, and we are happy to educate about lower cost options for regular prevention.**

But what about once it is too late and you find yourself inundated with fleas in your home? The key is to understanding that a flea life cycle is about 90 days, and you will have to diligently work to stay consistent in your treatment.

Best steps:

- 1) Purchase **Capstar** specific to each pet in your home. This is an oral flea medication that will immediately kill fleas quickly. It does not act as a monthly prevention - but you can bathe your pet along with the other steps listed, and the medication will still be effective.



2) **Gather all bedding and laundry**, especially where pets frequent and bag tightly in trash bags. Take these items out of your home to launder. Removable rugs, etc. should also be cleaned.

3) **Purchase blue Dawn dish soap**. This soap can be used to make mopping water for hardwood floors, and well as mixed with water in a spray bottle and used to spritz carpets prior to vacuuming. **ALL FLOORS** should be cleaned well first before any other efforts. Spray your floors, mop harder surfaces with sudsy dawn water, and let it sit for several minutes. Clean up solution with fresh water on hard floor surfaces, and vacuum your carpet well. Bag vacuum debris and immediately remove from your home and throw away. Shampooing furniture is sometimes needed, but can usually be done successfully with good vacuuming and wiping down including under cushions.



4) **Purchase a commercial bug killer**. We use Bug Stop. It can be pretty overwhelming when you spray, so open windows and use protection for breathing while the product is still wet. It doesn't take long to dry. Animals should not be in the areas sprayed until dry. Spray along your baseboards and areas heavily impacted by pets/fleas. Spray outside areas pets frequent.



5) **Treat your pet(s).** We prefer to give an oral Capstar pill, and then bathe the pet in blue Dawn dish soap. Start with a ring around the pet's neck, because fleas will travel up once the animal is wet. Later, scrub and massage thoroughly, and leave the solution sitting for a minute or two - then rinse. Do not apply flea medication until 24 hours after bathing.

6) Stay consistent! Washing bedding frequently and using regular flea prevention, cleaning as described, and potential need for spraying again is possible in the first 90 days.

7) It's important to mark your calendar so you'll know to apply the product on the same day each month or as instructed by the particular product manufacturer.

From Dr. Brooks - Good Flea Medication Options:

Topical: Frontline Plus, Frontline, Activyl, Cheristin, Revolution, Advantage II, Advantage, Vectra 3D

Oral: Nexgard, Simparica, Bravecto, Comfortis

*Give these products as directed (either monthly or as the directions specify) especially during the summer. Make sure to only give the oral products by mouth and the topical products on the skin in between the shoulder blades.

***Do NOT bathe pet or let pet get wet within 48 hours before or after giving topical flea prevention product. ***

***Do NOT give cats any flea prevention that is only for dogs. Only give flea prevention that is approved for cats to cats!**

It takes at least 3 months of giving flea prevention to a pet to help rid of a flea infestation, and they can still be constantly exposed to fleas.



It is more costly to treat than to prevent, but it's not too expensive to rid your home of these pests - especially when compared to the costs of potential vet bills and living with these painful, annoying insects. Please reach out to us if you have questions!

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