

# HOW TO GET RID OF FLEAS **FOREVER**



## **The Complete Guide to Flea Control**

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# INTRODUCTION

Fleas are a huge problem and naturally most people want them gone fast. The only way to accomplish this is to equip yourself with the knowledge of handling these parasites. This guide is a one-stop solution for all your flea related questions and it will teach you how to get rid of fleas once and for all. It contains step-by-step and easy-to-follow instructions for taking care of big and small flea infestations and also covers natural remedies and preventive measures for effective flea control.

The reason why I made this guide is that nearly 1.600 pets die every five years because of fleas and flea borne diseases and that is simply unacceptable. The guide will help provide solutions and methods that can help you control and prevent fleas in a manner which is safe for your pet and the surrounding environment.

## The problem with fleas

Fleas are parasites that are a nuisance to both humans and animals. They are well known disease carriers and, in extreme cases, can even render a home uninhabitable for longer periods of time. Certain flea species are also known to affect poultry, leading to serious financial losses for the owners.

I want to start by briefly explaining the history of fleas and their impact on mankind. This will provide you with a basic understanding of what exactly you are dealing with.



# THE HISTORY OF FLEAS AND FLEA BORNE DISEASES



There are thousands of different flea species (we have discovered more than 2.400). Most of these do not affect humans and tend to only feed on the blood of birds and wild animals. I will primarily restrict this guide to dog and cat fleas which do not only feed on these respective hosts but also cause a great deal of annoyance to us humans. Apart from dog and cat fleas, the rat flea can also bite humans leading to possible infections or diseases including the Bubonic plague.

As such, fleas and humanity have known to coexist for hundreds of thousands of years. This coexistence is naturally of the asymmetric or parasitic kind: it is favorable for the fleas but highly unfavorable to us.

Fleas belong to the order *Siphonaptera* and thousands of species exist around the world. The most well known and earliest disease caused by fleas in humans is *Tungiasis*. This is unfortunately still prevalent today in underprivileged communities of Latin America, the Caribbean as well as the Saharan Africa. The disease is also known to afflict domesticated animals. The human fleas, *Pulex Irritans*, can cause allergic dermatitis in human beings. Today, this species is not particularly a threat to humans



but it is still a cause of concern in many of the low-housing and underdeveloped regions across the world. *Pulex Irritans* attacks are most common in parts of Afghanistan, Kazakhstan as well as on humans and animals in South America.

Among the most important bacterial diseases spread by fleas is the **Black Death or plague**. Nearly 250 species of fleas across the world are known to be infected with the plague-causing bacterium, *Yersinia Pestis*. Thus, contrary to the popular notion that the plague is completely eradicated, many cases still spring up every now and then. The link between fleas and transmission of plague has been documented in thousands of medical texts and journals.

Several other human bacterial diseases have also been transmitted by fleas, including *Tularemia*. This disease occurs when the host is bitten by fleas having the *Francisella Tularensis* pathogen.

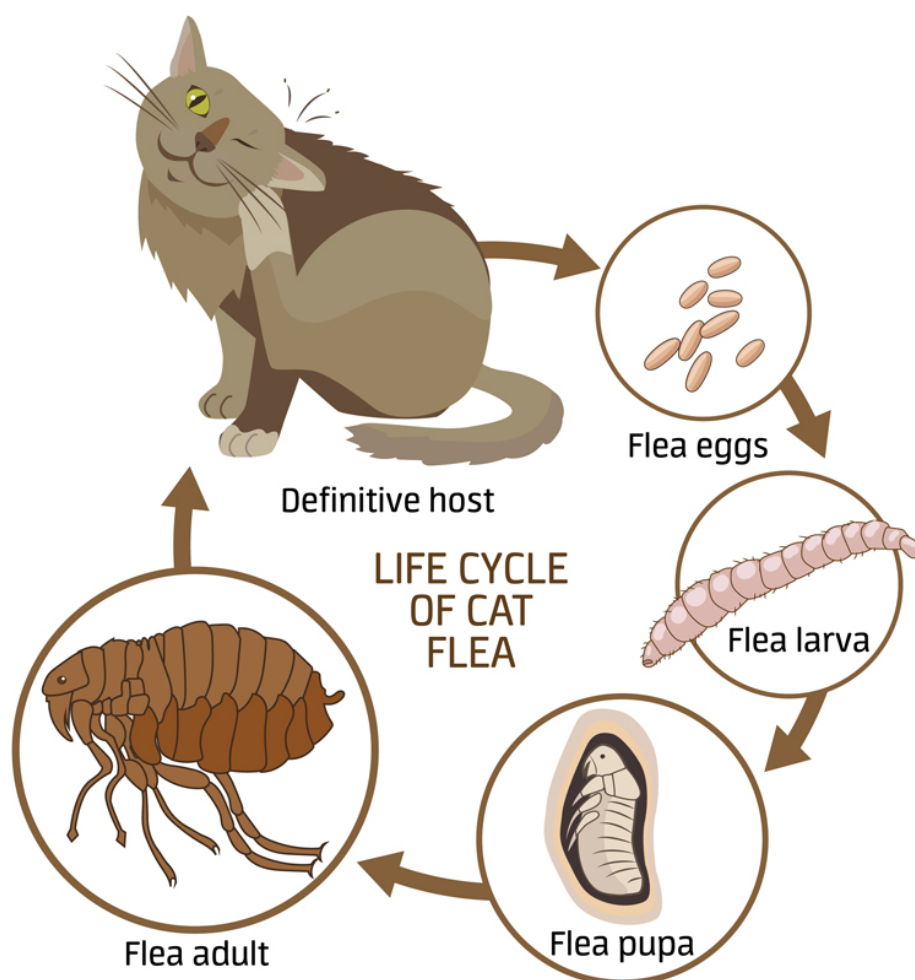
The *Ctenocephalides felis* and the *Ctenocephalides canis* (which are cat and dog fleas respectively) can also contain tapeworm or tapeworm eggs in their intestines. If the host animal accidentally swallows a flea carrying tapeworm, then it can be transmitted to the host.

As you can see, fleas can cause numerous direct and indirect effects on both humans and animals. The main reason why we should be wary of fleas is the fact that they can spread and transmit dangerous diseases. Tremendous research has been carried out on how fleas spread these diseases; however, humans are still largely unable to control fleas and flea borne illnesses. This can be attributed to the fact that most of the said studies have only been conducted on a very small number of flea species. Perhaps, the studies on *Pulex Irritans* – the human fleas, as well as the cat and dog fleas have been numerous, but there are several other species occurring on wild animals which must also be attended to. Only by filling in these gaps can we overcome and completely control the spread of fleas and the diseases they cause.

The next chapter will cover some of the most common types of fleas and their life cycles.



# DIFFERENT TYPES OF FLEAS AND FLEA LIFE STAGES



As I mentioned earlier, there are over 2.000 different flea varieties across the world. These are the ones we encounter most often:

**Dog Flea** (*Ctenocephalides canis*). This is seen mainly in Europe and parts of North America.

**Cat Flea** (*Ctenocephalides felis*). This is seen in most parts of North America and, unlike its name, does not just affect cats, but dogs and humans as well.



**Human flea** (*Pulex Irritans*). This flea feeds on humans and can cause severe allergic dermatitis in certain individuals and can also afflict dogs. It is a known carrier of tapeworm eggs.

**Oriental Rat flea** (*Xenopsylla cheopis*). This type of flea mainly takes on rats and mice as hosts but can move on to other animals in their absence. It is believed that this flea is the carrier of the Bubonic plague or the Black Death that wiped out a major part of the European population. This flea species, along with 200 others, is believed to carry the plague-causing pathogens. While plague is relatively rare today, cases still spring up every once in a while. Infection is mainly treated using antibiotics.

**Sticktight flea** (*Echidnophaga gallinacean*). It mainly attaches itself to poultry including hens and other birds or mammal hosts. Uncontrolled infestations can cause anemia in chickens, apart from intense anxiety or even death.

## The habitats and life cycle of fleas

Based on the type of flea in question, the habits and habitat varies. Dog and cat fleas live under domestic conditions, mainly since they need to be close to their host. The sticktight flea on the other hand, does not need to live on its host. If it decides to do so, it attaches itself firmly to the animal/poultry (like the name would imply) by burying its head into the skin.

Almost all the varieties of fleas have 4 major stages in their life cycle: **eggs**, **larvae**, **pupa** and **adult fleas**. The female adult flea lays several eggs, many of which are deposited on the host. These hatch 2-12 days later giving rise to white colored larvae.

The entire flea life cycle, from eggs to adult fleas, can take as little as 19 days, depending on the environmental conditions.

1. The optimal humidity is 75% to 85%.
2. The optimal temperature is 65F to 80F.
3. The flea lifespan can last between 6 months to 12 years. They require a blood meal to reach maturity and be able to reproduce.



## Flea eggs

The female fleas lay eggs in batches of 20 eggs or more. When laid on the host, the eggs roll off in the hosts' environments. Thus, the areas where the host animal sleeps or rests often becomes a breeding ground for fleas. Eggs normally take from a few days up to 2 weeks to hatch.

## Flea larvae

The flea larvae likes to feed on dead and decaying organic matter found on the host's body or in its environment. Lab testing has shown that blood meals are not necessary during this stage; only 12% of maturity occurs due to blood meals whereas yeast or discarded dog chow helps the larvae mature. Flea larvae do not have eyesight and they avoid the sun. They also prefer cold, dark spaces such as cracks and crevices found in the host's sleeping quarters.

## Flea pupa

When the larvae receive adequate amounts of food, they weave a silken cocoon and pupate. This stage comes nearly after 1-3 weeks of larval stage. The pupa then gives rise to adult fleas following 1-2 weeks of resting. It is believed that pupae are able to sense the host's presence based on sound vibration, carbon dioxide and heat emissions etc.

## Adult fleas

The adult fleas' sole aim in life is to feed and reproduce, so it is always on the lookout for hosts. The life span of an adult flea can extend for several years provided the conditions are favorable. A single female flea can lay nearly 4-5000 eggs in her lifetime.

## To get rid of fleas you need to be able to identify them

The *Ctenocephalides felis/canis* or the common dog/cat flea is characterized by the following features:

1. It has a chitin and an exoskeleton.
2. It is wingless and appears laterally compressed.



3. Fleas vary in color but are generally yellowish, brown to black. They measure 1 to 6 mm in length.
4. The strong jointed legs of fleas enable them to jump high.
5. Fleas can withstand freezing temperatures and pressure.
6. They mainly locate their hosts through their odor, body temperature and carbon dioxide emission in lower concentrations.

## Fleas as household pests – What causes flea infestations?

In the United States, there are many areas where dog and cat fleas are found in abundance. These are mainly concentrated around the eastern region. In the South East, the *Echidnophagia gallinacean* or sticktight/hen flea is a common variety affecting mammals, dogs, cats and poultry. The human fleas, namely *Pulex Irritans* and *Pulex Simulans*, can affect human beings as well as domesticated dogs.

Most pet owners keep their furry friends housebound during spring and early summer. These are also the months where the fleas are most active and lay their eggs upon the hosts. The eggs scatter all around the house and hatch into larvae that can hide in furniture cracks and crevices.

Flea infestations in animals occur from pet to pet interactions. Even walking in grassy trails can bring fleas inside your home. Humans can get bitten from dog and cat fleas particularly when a hungry adult flea emerges from the cocoon and seeks a blood meal. In absence of animals, these fleas also tend to bite humans. I have experienced this myself.

The signs of flea bites should be taken seriously as it means that there is a flea infestation developing in and around your home and in your yard. The fact that you have pets also means that there is support for the flea larvae which will continue to thrive and grow into adult fleas if left uncontrolled. The vicious cycle will then continue with female fleas laying thousands of eggs and the flea population increasing in numbers.



Homeowners who also keep livestock are at a greater risk of having these animals infested by cat, dog and even human fleas. Chickens, calves and pigs make for great hosts for many flea species. The way your livestock is housed can create ideal breeding grounds for fleas. The flea larvae can thrive on feces and urine of the livestock and these infested barns may become continual sources of adult fleas which can, in turn, bite cats, dogs as well as humans.

In the next chapter I will explain the pathogenesis of flea bites and flea dermatitis seen in humans, dogs and cats. Later in this book, I will show you some of the most effective ways of eradicating fleas to keep your home and pets safe. If you just want to know how to get rid of fleas right away, you can jump straight to that chapter now.



# FLEA BITE IDENTIFICATION, PREVENTION AND TREATMENT



Flea bites on humans are an inevitable consequence of keeping furry and cuddly pets. Almost all the cases of flea bites on humans I hear of come from cat or dog fleas – not human fleas. This is most likely also the type of flea you are dealing with and what is causing the bites on your body.

## Identifying flea bites on humans

Flea bites on humans do not usually cause any harm, but they can be very annoying and frustrating. They are easily recognized by the following characteristics:

1. They appear typically as red spots that are 1-3 mm in diameter.
2. There may be a central puncture mark at the apex of each papule.
3. The bites generally occur on lower limbs, around the ankles and normally in crops of rows, but can also be found on the upper body.

4. Flea bites may even occur in absence of pets, particularly if you move to a house that has been devoid of pets for several years. This is because the flea larvae and eggs can remain dormant for a long time but are activated by human vibrations, heat and CO2 that is emitted by us in small quantities.

## What happens when fleas bite

Fleas have certain feeding habits you should know about. These are the most important ones:

- The male and female adult fleas can take up to 10 blood meals in a day.
- There may be multiple bites seen on humans but these are not necessarily indicative of a large or numerous flea infestations. What this means is that a single flea could be causing the bite marks while feeding intensively.
- Fleas tend to secrete a chemical compound (lipase and amylase) from their saliva into the host's blood. This is done to prevent the blood from coagulating, helping it feed easily. These compounds can give rise to immune system response which is what causes an intense itching. In dogs and cats, such immune response creates a far more intense reaction. So if your pets are continuously scratching themselves, it is a surefire sign that you are dealing with a flea infestation.

## Identifying flea bites on pets

Upon examining your pet's skin around the neck or base of the tail, you will notice some of these signs:

1. Salt- and pepper-like mix on the animal's body. This is called flea debris and is the result of the shed exoskeleton of flea larvae as it develops into an adult.
2. You might also see adult fleas crawling in the pet's fur.
3. Black or rust colored comma-shaped 'dandruff' may be visible. These are scabs that occur from flea bites.



4. Presence of red itchy welts or lesions on the pet's stomach and groin areas. These typically occur within 15 minutes of the bite and can stay for up to 48 hours. In cats, typical fleas bite allergy can cause papular eruption, crusting and miliarial dermatitis.
5. You might also notice flea debris surrounding the pet's resting areas.
6. Your pet might appear restless and anxious. It could be chasing its tail trying to chew and bite it.
7. In extreme cases, flea allergy dermatitis in sensitive pets could cause extreme itchiness and hair loss in the rump and tail areas.

## Diagnosis of flea bites on humans and pets

After discovering symptoms of flea bites (see what to look for above) you need to diagnose the problem:

1. The aforementioned clinical signs can help a doctor/vet diagnose flea bites.
2. Flea and flea dirt can be identified by pet owners in areas inhabited by the pets, particularly the pet's bedding.
3. Many humans and animals tend to develop immunity towards flea bites. So a cat or dog covered with fleas could in some cases be minimally bothered by them.
4. Vets can perform an intra dermal skin test using aqueous flea allergens. This test can confirm the flea bites.

## Preventing flea bites

These are the steps you need to follow to prevent flea bites on your pets, your family and yourself:

1. Treat your pets for fleas using vet approved flea products. Later on I will explain how to get rid of fleas from your premises as well as on your pets.
2. Eliminate trash and resting/nesting places for wild animals around your home.
3. Avoid picking up dead or sick wild animals with your bare hands. Use gloves if needed.

4. Keep pet food safely stored away from rodents.
5. Do not let your pets sleep in your bedroom or in your bed as this will increase the risk of you getting bitten.
6. Use skin creams with insect repellents (DEET). These are known to provide relief from scratching on existing bites and also prevent new bites to some extent.
7. Wear socks, long sleeved shirts and full pants to avoid flea bites on lower limbs.
8. Avoid walking on grassy or wooded trails as these are areas that are known to bring fleas, ticks and mites into your home.
9. Keep your grass mowed and trimmed to eliminate hiding places for fleas.
10. Vacuum carpets and wash all human and pet bedding often.
11. Use insect growth regulator based house sprays around the home to eliminate larvae and flea eggs.

## Treating flea bites on pets and humans

Flea allergy dermatitis can lead to several uncomfortable symptoms like itching, pain and inflammation. It is not something that should be overlooked – you need to take action as soon as the problem arises.

### How to treat flea bites on humans

1. Wash the bitten region using warm water and antibacterial soap solution. You can also apply some ice or a bag of frozen vegetables to the skin to reduce swelling.
2. Apply some Aloe Vera based skin cream to the bite. This helps calm redness and can also stop itchiness and pain. You could also directly cut open a leaf of the Aloe Vera plant and apply the gel to the bitten region.
3. Alternatively, use some over-the-counter 1% hydrocortisone cream on the bite to relieve swelling.
4. You can also use some Calamine lotion, Neosporin® or other topical antibacterial skin creams that are available on hand. All these can relieve pain and itchiness from most insect bites.

5. Make use of antihistamine such as Benadryl® in case of severe itching and swelling.
6. If a bacterial skin infection (Pyoderma) occurs due to scratching the bitten area, you should see a doctor who could provide some oral antibiotics. Signs of bacterial skin infections include pus, fever and watery discharge from the skin wound.
7. Continual flea treatment and eradication methods must be used to prevent flea bites from recurring.

### How to treat flea bites on pets

1. Bathe the pet using soothing oatmeal shampoo and warm water. You could also use some Epsom salts mixed with warm water for bathing itchy pets. Do not use chemical based shampoos if open sores or wounds exist on the animal. Apply some OTC hydrocortisone cream on the sores following the bath.
2. Feed the pet a good, healthy diet with plenty of fish oil. Ask your doctor if supplementation with fish oil caplets might be beneficial for your pet.
3. For extreme itchiness, rub some coconut oil or olive oil on the bitten region. These oils are healthy and non toxic, even if they are licked. Both varieties will help prevent itchiness and inflammation from flea bites.
4. You could also apply some natural remedies like Aloe Vera gel or calendula extracts, both of which are safe for the pet and can help control pain and redness usually associated with insect bites.
5. Benadryl® or other oral antihistamines may also be used, particularly when the pet seems extremely uncomfortable from itching. Always talk to your vet about specific dosing instructions.
6. As in humans, bacterial skin infections (occurring when the pet chews or bites itself) must not be ignored and should be treated with the help of a vet. Oral/topical antibiotics or steroids might be needed for recovery.
7. Proper flea control will keep your pets safe and prevent new flea bites.



In the next chapter, I will show you how to get rid of fleas using proven methods and techniques, and I will also introduce you to some products that makes the whole process a lot easier.



# HOW TO GET RID OF FLEAS AND PRODUCTS FOR FLEA CONTROL



The single most effective way to get rid of fleas is to eradicate them from your pet as well as its environment. It is essential that every homeowner with a pet uses flea control products inside the home, including the basement and other rooms, as well as the exterior areas such as the yard, decks, porches etc. Naturally, if you have multiple pets, the flea control program must be made applicable to all of them.

If the flea problem is serious enough, a professional pest control company must be brought in to perform the initial treatment. Not only is this beneficial for larger flea infestations; it is often necessary to kickstart an effective flea control program. So please do not rule out professional help, sometimes this is the best solution. That being said, you will be amazed of what you can actually do yourself with the right knowledge and products.



## Different types of flea control products

Flea control products for pets come in multiple formats such as shampoos, sprays, powders, liquids and oral tablets or injections. When you set out to buy these different products, make sure you compare their effectiveness in killing the various life stages of fleas. Some flea products are “adulticides” meaning they only kill the adult fleas. Others belong to the category of Insect Growth Regulators (IGRs) that can control and prevent fleas by halting maturation of their larval and egg stages.

### Pyrethrins

This class of insecticide is available in the form of shampoos and spot-on sprays which can be topically applied to the pet. Pyrethrins are mainly effective against adult fleas. Some of the pyrethrin based products have very little residual action. Moreover, the spot-on treatment must be repeated after the pet has been bathed, exposed to UV light or swimming etc. These are generally considered safe and non toxic for dogs at most concentrations, but the higher levels of pyrethrins can be poisonous to felines.

### Permethrins

Higher concentrations of permethrins (over 2%) must not be used on cats. Permethrins have greater residual action and can remain effective for longer periods. They are also effective against adult fleas and are usually available in the form of powders, sprays and shampoos. Some side effects of excess permethrin on dogs include ear flicking, salivation, muscular tremors, vomiting, seizures etc.

### Fipronil

This is available under the brand name Frontline®. It is also available as a topical application which is highly effective against adult fleas. The best part about Fipronil is that it remains effective despite exposure to water or UV rays. It even works after the pet has been bathed. Repeat treatment must be done every 4 weeks. Fipronil is also effective



for preventing ticks and mites on dogs, puppies, cats and kittens over 6 weeks.

## **Fipronil and Methoprene**

The combination of Fipronil and Methoprene is available under the brand name of Frontline Plus®. The advantage of using this combination is that it is effective against larvae and eggs apart from killing the adult fleas. It will also protect your pet against ticks.

## **Imidacloprid**

Imidacloprid is available under the brand name Advantage®. It is a once-a-month topical application product for controlling adult fleas. The disadvantage of Imidacloprid is that it does not kill ticks and it becomes ineffective after being in contact with water.

## **Imidacloprid and Permethrin**

The combination of Imidacloprid and Permethrin is used only on dogs and comes under the brand name K9 Advantage®. It is a topical product that is effective against fleas, ticks and mosquitoes.

## **Oral products for getting rid of fleas**

### **Nitenpyram**

Known under the brand name Capstar®. This is a once-a-month oral tablet that can kill adult fleas in a short period of time. Nitenpyram is safe for puppies and kittens over 6 weeks depending on the weight of the animal.

### **Lufenuron**

Used in the brand Program®. It is a tablet or suspension that can prevent larvae of fleas from developing into adults. It is effective for dogs and cats and must be administered once a month.

## **Flea prevention in your home and on your pets**

Preventing fleas when you are living in warmer regions can be an uphill task. The environment allows fleas to multiply all year round making it



an ideal place for the fleas to stay. Added to this, if your pets go outdoors for walks etc, they can pick up fleas from the grass. The safest way to a flea-free pet would be to prevent it from going outdoors as this would also keep the insides of your home free from fleas. That would be a shame though and I would never ask anyone to do that. Instead, let me show you what you can do to protect your home and your pets from fleas.

Here are some methods that can be used indoors and outdoors for keeping your pet and home flea free:

### **Flea traps**

These can be made at home but are also available in stores. They consist of plastic trays lined with sticky paper that may have special scents to attract fleas. Fleas jump into the trays and are imprisoned by the sticky paper.

### **Flea foggers/bombs and yard treatment**

Special flea foggers and sprays can be used indoors on rugs and carpets as well as outdoors in the yard to keep it free of fleas. These products mainly contain insect growth regulators that can kill eggs, larvae and adult fleas.

### **Grooming the pet**

Long haired pets must be groomed and combed using special flea combs that allow the hair to pass through their teeth but catch the fleas and their debris. You can even handpick fleas where possible from time to time. Always discard the trapped fleas in soapy water or alcohol solution. Always wash your hands after touching fleas. I groom my own pets during flea season when they have been outside. This prevents them from carrying new fleas into the home.

### **Shampoos and powders**

Flea control shampoos and powders are usually effective and can give excellent results within minutes. However, some shampoos are alcohol based which can dry the pets' skin leading to itching, flaking and

dandruff. Flea control powders can be effective but need to be applied frequently to show results.

## Dips

Dips can be great for killing fleas, especially in large infestations. Most flea dips are chemical based, so do talk to your vet about which one is right for your pet. Cats should not be bathed in dips as they are more sensitive to chemicals and could lick it off while self-grooming. Dips can be prepared by mixing with equal amounts of water and pouring or spraying it on the dog. It must then be air dried so that residual action of the chemical continues to kill the fleas and larvae.

## Flea collars

Flea collars are reliable methods for flea control and they can last up to 6 months. They usually consist of plastic strips that are sprayed or immersed in some chemical, usually a toxin for fleas including organophosphates or carbamate insecticides. Some of these can be toxic to pets or could cause skin irritation, so do talk to your vet prior to use.

See my complete list of [flea remedies](#) that can help you get rid of fleas in your home and on your pets.

## Step by step flea control in and outside your home

### How to get rid of fleas in your home

Neglecting to treat the pet's environment will surely bring back the fleas. 9 out of 10 times this is why people are struggling with fleas for several months to years. Here are some steps to take when dealing with flea infestations:

- Before treatment, remove all toys, books, pet supplies and bowls from the premises.
- Cover all kitchen working areas like tabletops, counters, islands etc. with plastic sheets.
- Cover fish aquariums and disconnect the aerators.
- Wash the pet's bedding and all household linen in hot water (as much as the fabrics can withstand).



**Step 1: Vacuum.** Vacuuming thoroughly can help remove eggs, larvae and adult fleas. Ensure that you treat the vacuum bags with flea insecticide powders so that the fleas are trapped and killed instantly. Vacuum all the rooms in your home. Discard the vacuum bags outdoors far away from the premises.

**Step 2: Apply the insecticide.** Make sure you keep pets and kids away while treating the floors with flea insecticides. It will take a few hours for application and treatment of all the areas. You can also pull all furniture away from the walls. This will allow you to get behind cabinets, shelves etc. Make sure to use a vet-approved insecticide. This includes permethrin based products or a combination of that with other chemicals or IGRs (methoprene and pyriproxyfen) as mentioned above. In the next chapter I will explain about herbal and natural treatments for getting rid of fleas so make sure you stick around for that.

**Step 3: Allow the insecticide to remain on surfaces for a few hours.** You can open the windows for air circulation. It is important to let the insect growth regulators work deeply in order to get rid of eggs and larval stages.

**Step 4: Vacuum again.** Once the set number of hours has passed, you can vacuum again to trap the dead larvae and eggs. Make sure you reach all the areas under the rugs, on carpets, beneath pet cushions, under chairs, sofas etc. You do not need to treat hardwood and vinyl floors, just vacuum them.

**Step 5: Repeat treatment after 14 days.** In the next two weeks, do expect to see some fleas. Re-treatment is necessary to ensure that you get the remaining survivors. Continue to vacuum daily, if required. You can also use flea traps to get the remaining fleas. If you still see fleas after 3-4 weeks, re-treat your home with the IGRs.

### How to get rid of fleas in your yard

In warmer areas, treating the yard can be as necessary as treating the home and the pet itself. Yard and deck treatment is even more important when your pet spends a large part of the day outside.

**Step 1:** Concentrate on outdoor areas such as patios, play-sets, decks etc. where the pet sleeps.

**Step 2:** Use products like chlorpyrifos (Dursban) or permethrin based insecticides which can be sprayed all around the yard. Ensure treating kennels and decks with methoprene or pyriproxyfen based IGRs.

**Step 3:** Consider hiring a professional to treat the yard, especially if you lack the time to do these steps.

### How to get rid of fleas on your pet

Preferably treat your pet on the same day as you are treating your home and your yard.

**Step 1:** Shampoo or dip the pet in vet approved flea control products.

**Step 2:** Get the pet seen by a vet who can recommend or prescribe a topical or oral product with Insect Growth Regulator. Many of these have a residual action against fleas, ticks and mites and can remain effective for up to 3 months.

**Step 3:** Use spot-on treatment which prevent flea eggs from hatching.

**Step 4:** Always ensure using specific and approved products for flea control on pets. Some products may be used for cats and dogs while others might be animal specific. Some products should not be used on very young puppies and kittens. In the next chapter I will mention some herbal and non toxic products for treating pets.

### Get my step by step checklist on how to get rid of fleas as a PDF

Fleas can be successfully eradicated and controlled using the steps outlined above. To make things a little easier, I have made a PDF that shows how to get rid of fleas in a few simple steps. Get it now for free:

1. [Download the checklist](#) (Right-Click / Save As)
2. Print it out and read through it carefully
3. Follow the simple steps one by one
4. Share the PDF with other pet owners



5. [Sign up for my newsletter](#) for more tips

The next chapter is all about natural flea control which many of my readers have been asking for.

# ALL NATURAL FLEA TREATMENT AND PREVENTION



Conventional flea control products recommended by most veterinarians are perceived as toxic and that is what makes natural flea control an attractive option for pet owners looking for non hazardous flea products.

However, I feel that I must warn you about some of the herbal or natural products out there. They could potentially be even more dangerous to your pets so make sure you do your research first.

In this chapter I will show you some of the safe and effective methods for natural flea treatment and prevention. They may not always work as quickly as insecticides, but they are good for your pet, your family and the environment.

Natural flea control falls into 3 different categories:

- Topical applications.



- Dietary additives.
- Environmental flea control.

## Topical products for natural flea control

These mainly constitute essential oils that are botanical elements in highly concentrated form, normally obtained/extracted from leaves and barks of trees, herbs and shrubs. Many essential oils are safe when applied directly to the skin. However, some compounds can cause allergic reactions and some can be downright toxic and deadly, particularly to cats.

Here is a list of herbs and essential oils that are safe for topical application on dogs:

- Juniper
- Bergamot
- Lavender
- Cedar
- Citronella
- Eucalyptus
- Geranium

These are some of the effective herbs that can be used for natural flea control on dogs. They are available readily as aromatherapy oils but must be used diluted. Simply add a few drops of any of these oils to spray bottles with water and/or rub them on the pets collar for flea repellence. For cats, you should only use lavender oil. Never use pennyroyal oil as it is known to cause serious liver problems.

## Oral or dietary additives

Natural flea control can also be obtained through proper diet that is rich in essential oils and B-vitamins. Dogs that are fed with Brewer's Yeast or B-complex vitamins and zinc etc. are known to have fewer problems with fleas. Essential fatty acids are also important for dogs and cats and can be bought in the form of salmon oil etc. to be added to the daily food. Oil from herbs, like evening primrose, is also found to be beneficial for dogs

and cats having flea problems. Ask your vet if these are right for your pet.

## Homeopathic remedies

If your pet is suffering from flea allergy dermatitis, it is best to consult a homeopath for prescribing natural remedies. Many remedies are readily available in whole food stores, including *sulfur* 30C potency which can effectively cure all kinds of skin ailments in pets. For chronic scratching due to fleas, the pet may be given *Arsenicum* and *Mezereum* which is effective on scabs and rashes.

## How to get rid of fleas naturally

### Natural flea control in the home

- Pick up and put away all toys, feeding bowls etc. Cover all areas. Cover and disconnect fish aquarium and aerators.
- Steam clean and vacuum carpets thoroughly. Steam cleaning is effective for killing flea eggs and larvae.
- Vacuum the carpet and rugs paying special attention to areas where the pet sleeps. Do this at least 2 times each week.
- Launder the pet's bedding in hot water with detergent or a little bleach. Dry it on the highest heat setting.
- Once a month, add some anti flea minerals and salts to the carpets. Many pest control companies can help do this job for you. Store bought Borax powder can also help. Borax has sharp crystalline edges that literally rip the fleas' exoskeletons and kill them instantly. Leave the Borax powder on the carpet for at least 3 days before vacuuming thoroughly. Try and keep pets and kids away during treatment.
- Once a year treatment with diatomaceous earth powder (which is the fossilized remains of a type of algae) is also recommended for flea control. DE powder is available in organic food grades and can be used safely and effectively around pets and kids. It has a similar action to the Borax powder and kills fleas from inside out.



## Natural flea control in the yard

- Mow the lawn and grass regularly. Shorter grass allows the sunshine to kill the fleas and their eggs. Water and flood the lawns to repel larvae and adult fleas.
- Spray beneficial nematode solution all over the grass, under porches and decks. This will repel fleas and deter new infestations.
- Declutter and remove/rake all leaves and trash from the yard. This will discourage pets from sleeping in these areas. It will also eliminate the hiding or resting places of other wild animals like squirrels, rodents, possums and raccoons etc. that often end up bringing fleas into the home.
- If your pet has a favorite sleeping spot in the yard, cover it with a heavy plastic sheet or any object to discourage it.
- Use agricultural lime on grass and leaves to dry out the fleas.

## Natural flea control on the pet

- Bathe the pet using a **natural anti-flea shampoo**. Neem and eucalyptus or aloe vera based shampoos are effective in killing fleas without harming the pet. Other non toxic shampoos are those containing D-Limonene. As a final rinse, add some Apple cider vinegar (ACV) to the bath water. Allow the animal to air dry. ACV helps give a nice shine to the coat and also repels fleas.
- Use a **flea comb** to groom the pet. This will help catch flea and flea debris. Dispose-off the caught and trapped fleas in alcohol or apple cider vinegar solution. Make regular grooming a habit to maintain the coat, at least on long haired animals like my own dogs. They love being groomed.
- Apply **herbal flea powder** all over the pet. You can make your own formula or simply buy one from the pet store. A simple recipe: Powdered herbs like Eucalyptus, Lavender, Rosemary, Fennel, Wormwood, Yellow Dock and Rue. Mix it and apply it over the pet.
- Make and **attach a herbal flea collar**. Many natural food stores carry herbal flea collars or you can make one by taking a plastic or rubber collar and infusing it in the herbal essential oils



mentioned above. Add a few drops of the essential oils every now and then to recharge the collar.

- Make a **natural pet skin toner**. Use the following skin toner recipe for rubbing on the pet's fur: Thinly slice lemon with its peel and add it to a pint of boiling water. Let it steep overnight. Wipe the pet's fur with this solution using a sponge. Use daily for healthier and shinier coat as well as for treating other skin ailments.



## FINAL WORDS

The overall goal of any treatment you use is to ensure getting rid of fleas in all stages everywhere, not just on the pet itself but also in their environment. Thankfully, flea control measures have changed dramatically over the years and most insect growth regulators require fewer applications because of their residual action. Despite your best efforts, fleas can come back and additional treatment may be needed. If this is the case, it is important that you do not lose faith. Remember that help is always to be found in the [FleaBites.net Forum](http://FleaBites.net).

I hope my complete guide to flea control has answered all your questions and showed you how to get rid of fleas in a simple and understandable way. Do tell others about my work, hopefully it can help them too.

Thank you so much for buying this book and supporting my website.

Yours Gratefully,

Jacob

