

# Hidden Valley Animal Clinic

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## **HELP!! My pets have fleas. What should I do???**

Fleas are the most common external parasite of dogs and cats. Flea allergy dermatitis is the most common skin disease of dogs and cats! The ideal flea control program utilizes products that target the various stages of the flea life cycle, not only the adult fleas on the pet. In order to help you select the most appropriate products to achieve a flea-free existence for an allergic pet, we will start by telling you about the life cycle of the flea.

### **THE LIFE CYCLE OF THE FLEA**

Eggs: are laid in the hair coat and are designed to fall off your pet. They are resistant to insecticides, but susceptible to various Insect Growth Regulators.

Larvae: develop in the pet's environment. They like areas with low light and high moisture. Larvae are susceptible to traditional insecticides and insect growth regulators. Larvae eventually spin cocoons and become pupa.

Pupae: are resistant to freezing, desiccation (drying), and insecticides. Pupae can lie dormant for up to 9 months; they are stimulated to hatch as young adults by vibration (walking on the carpet), warm temperatures and increased CO<sub>2</sub> (carbon dioxide) from your pet's breath. Normally, hatching occurs when a dog or cat is near and the new flea finds the pet within seconds.

Adults: only account for 3-5 % of the of the flea population. This is why treating the environment is so important. Completion of the life cycle from egg to adult often varies from 2-4 weeks. Adult cat fleas cannot survive or lay eggs without a blood meal, but once it is feeding on a DOG or CAT, the female can lay 40-50 eggs per day and up to 3,000 in their 3-week lifetime. Newly hatched fleas need to start feeding within 2 days. They start to lay eggs 2 days after their first blood meal. The optimum temperature for flea survival is 70F to 85F and at an optimum humidity of 80%.

### **FLEA CONTROL RECOMMENDATIONS**

For the flea allergic patient 100% flea control is required to remain itch free. Even very minimal exposure may be sufficient to perpetuate itching in an allergic patient (one or 2 bites per week is enough!).

### **THE MOST IMPORTANT RULES FOR FLEA CONTROL ARE**

- 1) **ALL pets must be treated**
- 2) **Both the pets and the indoor and outdoor environment must be treated**
- 3) **Treat for fleas all year round**

### **FLEA CONTROL PRODUCTS AND PROCEDURES**

Flea populations and treatment protocols can be monitored quite simply using a flea comb. Record the number of fleas caught each day to determine if the population is increasing or decreasing.

#### Treating the House:

Vacuum the floors thoroughly in the corners, along the wall edges, under the furniture and other low traffic areas. Flea larvae survive best in low light low traffic areas. Vacuum the floors, carpets and furniture frequently using a vacuum with good suction and discard the bag after each time. Flea eggs and pupae can survive and hatch in a vacuum bag. Discard or frequently wash your pet's bedding. Steam clean the carpets if possible, which will slow down flea development and allow flea larvae to dry up. Regularly wash your pets bedding and rugs that they lay on. Use Vet-Kem's Siphotrol Plus II Premise Spray to treat the carpet after everything has been cleaned.

### Treating the Yard:

Use Vet-Kem's Siphotrol® Yard Spray once a month in the shady areas of the yard. Apply in the evening and allow to dry overnight before allowing your pets to back into the treated areas.

### Treating the Pets:

There are products that are designed to kill the adult fleas, sterilize the eggs that are laid, prevent the growth of the larvae or a combination of these. Some products have a long lasting residual effect and some have a quick acting but short lasting effect. Some even have an effect on ticks and heartworms. There are products for your pet and some for the house and yard.

## **Topical Products**

**ADVANTAGE II®** (IMIDACLOPRID and Pyriproxyfen) from Bayer: It is labeled for puppies 7 weeks of age and kittens 8 weeks of age. It must be applied 2 days before or 2 days after bathing. It is not washed off after it has been on for 2 days. It is effective for fleas only. It also contains a growth regulator that prevents flea eggs from hatching.

**ADVANTIX II®** (IMIDACLOPRID and Permethrin) \*\*\* NOT FOR USE IN CATS\*\* from Bayer: It is labeled for puppies 7 weeks of age and kittens 8 weeks of age. It must be applied 2 days before or 2 days after bathing. It is not washed off after it has been on for 2 days. It is effective for Fleas, Ticks and Mosquitoes. It also contains a growth regulator that prevents flea eggs from hatching.

**VECTRA 3D®** (DINOTEFURAN, PYRIPROXYFEN and PERMETHRIN) from Ceva:

\*\* DO NOT USE ON CATS\*\* It is labeled for puppies 7 weeks of age. Best if applied 2 days before or 2 days after a bath. Kills and repels fleas (controls flea eggs, larvae and pupae), kills and repels ticks, kills mosquitoes and repels and kills sand fleas. It also contains a growth regulator that prevents flea eggs from hatching.

**VECTRA®** (DINOTEFURAN and PYRIPROXYFEN) from Ceva: It is labeled for puppies and kittens 8 weeks of age. Kills fleas (controls flea eggs, larvae and pupae). It also contains a growth regulator that prevents flea eggs from hatching.

**FRONTLINE PLUS®** (FIPRONIL and S-Methoprene) from Merial: It is labeled for puppies and kittens 8 weeks of age and 2 pounds. It must be applied 2 days before or 2 days after bathing. It is not washed off after it has been on for 2 days. It is also effective against ticks. Frontline stimulates the flea's nervous system to cause death. You may notice an increase in flea activity and your pet may become slightly itchy after applying Frontline due to the stimulant effect of the drug. It also contains a growth regulator that prevents flea eggs from hatching.

**REVOLUTION®** (SELAMECTIN) from Pfizer: Revolution is a topical medication that is absorbed into the cat's system. It is safe for cats 8 weeks of age and older. It kills adult fleas and keeps eggs from hatching. It also prevents heartworms, ear mites and two intestinal parasites (round worms and hook worms). This is a very good product for cats! Dogs MUST be tested for heartworm before starting this product.

## **Flea/Tick Collars**

**Seresto®** (Flumethrin and Imidacloprid) from Bayer: Labeled for puppies 7 weeks of age and kittens 8 weeks of age. Labeled to kill fleas, kill and repel ticks. Labeled to provide up to 8 months protection against Fleas and Ticks.

**Scalibor®** (Deltamethrin) from Intervet: Labeled for use in dogs 12 weeks and older. Labeled to provide up to 6 months protection against Fleas and Ticks. DO NOT USE ON CATS

## **Oral Products**

**Comfortis®**(SPINOSAD) from Elanco: It is labeled for puppies and kittens 14 weeks of age. Kills adult fleas

**\*\* DO NOT USE De-greasing/flea shampoos with these products as it will strip the product off your pet.**

**\*\* DO NOT USE MULTIPLE types of topical flea products on your pet(s)**

**\*\* AVOID OVER THE COUNTER PRODUCTS (i.e.: Hartz®, Zodiac®, Sargents® and Frontline type products)**

**\*\* AVOID buying any FLEA, Tick or Heartworm product on the Internet**

## **WHAT TO DO**

### **How do I treat a flea problem?**

#### **DOGS and CATS: Treat ALL PETS!!**

1. For Dogs: Use Advantage, Advantix, Comfortis, Vectra 3D and Frontline Plus once every 30 days year round

For Cats: Use Advantage, Comfortis, Vectra, Frontline Plus or Revolution once every 30 days year round

2. Treat the house with Vet-Kem's Siphotrol Plus II after thoroughly vacuuming and cleaning the house

3. Treat the yard with Vet-Kem's Siphotrol® Yard Spray as directed on the bottle or once a month.

Treat the low light moist areas of the yard.

4. Use a flea comb every 2 days to see if this is working

### **How do I prevent or control a flea problem?**

#### **DOGS: Treat ALL PETS!!**

1. Use your flea preventative every 30 days

2. Spray the Yard once a month with Vet-Kem's Siphotrol® Yard Spray

#### **CATS: Treat ALL PETS!!**

1. Use your flea preventative every 30 days

2. For outdoor cats, treat the yard once a month with Vet-Kem's Siphotrol® Yard Spray along with treating them with one of the above medications.