

# Fleas & Ticks

## WHAT ARE FLEAS?



Fleas are tiny, wingless, external parasites that survive by consuming the blood of their hosts. Although there are over 2,000 species in the world, there is only one that should seriously concern pet owners: *Ctenocephalides felis*, also known as the cat flea.

If left untreated, a heavy flea infestation can be deadly, especially to smaller or younger animals.

**FLEAS ARE MORE THAN JUST A NUISANCE - FLEAS CAN KILL.**

Because fleas survive through blood consumption, their host can suffer from anemia - a condition in which a person or animal lacks enough red blood cells to properly carry oxygen to vital organs.

Along with problems from blood loss, fleas can cause serious skin issues. Severe itching, skin infections and hair loss are common. Some animals even become allergic to fleas and develop flea allergy dermatitis.

Despite being a parasite themselves, fleas are also known to transmit infections and other parasites, including tapeworms.



## FLEA PREVENTION

When it comes to fleas, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure! Talk to your veterinarian about flea prevention; most practices sell quality products or will recommend ones best-suited to protect your pet.

## WHAT ARE TICKS?



Similar to fleas, ticks are an external parasite that bite and feed on the blood of their hosts. The bite itself is usually not painful, but the parasite can transmit diseases and cause tick paralysis. They typically live in grassy and wooded areas.

## PREVENTING TICKS INDOORS

If you find ticks in your home, flea and tick foggers, sprays or powders can be used. Indoors, ticks typically crawl (they don't jump) up and may be found in cracks around windows and doors. A one-foot barrier of insecticide, where the carpeting and wall meet, can help with tick control.

*This information is strictly for educational purposes only. If your dog is experiencing symptoms, please contact your veterinarian.*



## PREVENTING TICKS OUTDOORS

- Mow the lawn frequently and clear tall grasses, brush, and leaf litter around the home
- Place a 3-ft wide barrier of wood chips or gravel between lawns and wooded areas to limit tick migration
- Stack wood neatly and in a dry area - this discourages rodents who could be used as tick hosts
- Keep playground equipment, patios, decks, and outdoor furniture away from yard edges and trees
- Discourage unwelcome animals such as deer, raccoons, etc. that may act as a host from entering your yard by constructing fences

## HOW TO REMOVE TICKS

1. Using fine-tipped tweezers, grasp the tick as close to the surface of the skin as possible.
2. Pull upward with steady, even motion. Do not twist or jerk the tick; this can cause the mouth-parts to break off and remain in the skin. If this happens, remove them with tweezers. If you are unable to safely and easily remove the mouth, leave it alone and let the skin heal.
3. Once the tick is removed, thoroughly clean the area and your hands with rubbing alcohol, an iodine scrub, or soap and water.
4. Dispose of the tick by submersing it in alcohol, placing it in a sealed bag/container, wrapping it tightly in tape, or flushing it down the toilet. Never crush a tick with your fingers.

**DO NOT APPLY HOT MATCHES, PETROLEUM JELLY, TURPENTINE, NAIL POLISH, OR JUST RUBBING ALCOHOL ALONE TO REMOVE A TICK. THESE METHODS ARE INEFFECTIVE FOR TICK REMOVAL AND CAN CAUSE HARM TO YOUR PET.**

**Ask us about becoming a volunteer or foster!**

