



ABKA American Boarding
Kennels Association

Flea Control Products for Dogs and Cats

These products are available through veterinarians, some on-line pet product Web sites, and perhaps your local kennel.

Topical Products

Frontline and Frontline Plus: These products are recognized as the most effective medication, but also the most expensive. Frontline products are applied across the hair shafts by spreading along with natural skin oils. Therefore, it is best not to apply right after a bath, but three to four days later as the skin oils begin to return to the coat. Frontline controls both fleas and ticks. It is available as a spray or topspot. Topspot is applied backwards from wherever applied, so it never really goes forward to the face. Put a very small drop on the forehead of the pet and the rest on the back of the neck.

Advantage: This is another topical product like Frontline, but I consider it less effective and it doesn't last as long. Advantage itself is only effective against fleas, although the manufacturer also make a canine product called K9 Advantix, which works on ticks (cannot be used on cats).

Bio-Spot, Spot-on, Hartz Control: These are over-the-counter spot-on products similar to the veterinary versions. They contain an older, more toxic insecticide called permethrin that has been used for many years in flea products. They work to help prevent flea problems, but Frontline will work better to control fleas if your pet already has them.

Internal Products

Program: This product is given once a month orally by tablet to help prevent fleas or as an injection given to cats. It works by secreting the active ingredient into the natural skin oils, and when the female flea feeds on it, she will produce sterile eggs. It does not kill fleas, it only helps break the life cycle. Therefore, pets with flea bite allergy will still have reactions to the flea bites, and the pet owner will continually find live fleas on the dog or cat.

Sentinel: This injectable medication administered by veterinarians is used for flea and heartworm control. It works basically the same as Program. Both of these medications cost about the same as Frontline.

Flea collars, topical powders, sprays and flea shampoos as well as natural products are also widely available.

Adult fleas spend all of their time on a pet, but the rest of the life cycle—the egg, larva, pupa stages—happen off the pet in the environment of the house and yard. For a severe flea infestation, it is advisable to treat the environment at the same time as the pet. This will help break the flea life cycle and prevent more adult fleas from hopping onto the dog or cat. In general, though, it takes two to three weeks to totally eliminate a flea infestation.