

Got Fleas?

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Got Fleas?

By Nell Bennett Liquorman

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Author of Keep Fleas Off

Still using all the chemicals you can find to combat those fleas? Have you done everything outside of trying to shoot the fleas off the dog? You are not alone, there are an estimated more than 50 million households with pets, and yes, most are not just fighting the war against these pesky parasites, they are losing the war. Most people do not realize just how devastating the losses are. If only 10 per cent of these pet owners are treating the yard for fleas, can you imagine the amount of harmful chemicals that is getting into the ground water? These chemicals make their way to the sea where they have been found in fish and the seabirds that feed on fish. Clean water is a valuable resource, we cannot afford to destroy it. Think about all the chemicals put in our water now just to make it "safe to drink"; if you want to believe that it is.

Bathe your pet with a so-called flea shampoo, and you leave behind a petrochemical residue that can be unsafe for the pet and the household. If that is not bad enough, the pet will lick himself and yes, take an oral dose. Go into any grocery store and head for the pet care aisle. If you smell the flea products in the store, you are experiencing a nose full of their off-gassing. Face it, chemicals off-gas.

Perhaps, you think that flea powder is a better choice. Guess again! After holding your poor animal down long enough to sift this disagreeable stuff into his fur, he is going to shake off as much of it as possible, and who could blame him. This fine dust will migrate into anything around, the carpet, the furniture, and maybe even your own hair. It is sure to get up your nose. Maybe this is the universe trying to get you to stop this harmful practice. At any rate, now the flea powder is further out into the pet's fur, clearing the way for the fleas to continue to travel the skin on the pet, biting him and leaving behind debris. At minimum, you have fouled the environment, and you probably did the powdering inside your home. Since we have all probably done it, don't beat yourself up, at least not the first time.

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Flea collars are another dangerous choice that we have all made. The poison is right there on the collar for the purpose of rubbing off onto the pet. Will it rub off on anything else, like the hands of a small child, or even your own? You bet! Does your pet sleep in his collar? In your bed? What do you think is happening here? Essentially, we are just rubbing heaven knows what kind of chemicals all over us when we sleep with a pet that is wearing a poison necklace. Should you quit associating with your pet? Absolutely not! Pets are a valuable part of our lives. They offer companionship and teach us a lot as well.

Just show them more respect and stop using those awful flea collars.

Continuing your sojourn through the parasite jungle, the veterinarian's office is probably going to be your next stop. Aha! The flea dip. It has to work! Well, why not, it contains a contact killer, and because you got it from the vet you will assume it safe. Maybe it will kill the fleas that showed up on the pet today. Of course, submerging him in this poison means that some of it will be absorbed into the pet's

skin. Cats are especially sensitive, and dips have been known to kill some. It makes many sick. If it poisoned or weakened your pet, would you know what to look for? How many hours would you need to monitor your pet? When you pour out the dip, where does the poison go? So many questions, so many freaky answers. This should steer you away from flea dips.

The average pet owner is pretty sure that a flea spray for misting the pet on a regular basis will not only work, but is a real easy solution. Coating the outside of the hair doesn't work because the fleas will travel under it along the skin where the blood cells can be reached. Use this method, only if you want a toxic cloud that will float above the pet for you to breathe, or maybe, it will make its way into your air conditioning ducts and be well distributed throughout your home. Remember that these sprays contain poisons. If we breathe them in, our bodies can store them. Many people will think that this is just the price that must be paid, after all this is a war on fleas! The bigger question here is: "Do you really want your home to become a toxic waste site?" The residue spewed into your environment is going to stay there until someone cleans it up. And depending upon how you go about the clean up, you could just be making it worse, especially if you are using chemicals for the cleanup. Unless you are a chemist, don't assume that it is safe to mix one chemical with another.

Of course, you could always use pet meds, that is, medicine for the fleas that the pet must take. That hardly seems fair! Would you be able to tell how bad your pet feels from the side effects? At one time or another we have all taken a medication that we found to be disagreeable. The problem here is one of communication. The pet cannot tell you that the medicine does not suit him.

So, now you are ready for the weapons of "vast destruction". You go for the big guns. You will start using the poison to the back of the neck. That ought to take care of them, if the fleas come along first, before little hands. Of course, the liquid can be absorbed into the skin of the pet getting into his blood stream and going to all parts of his body. Most hearts and livers don't really require poisons. How about yourself, did you absorb any? Did you breathe in any vapors? Does the product continue to emit vapors? If you can smell it, maybe you already know that the vapors are there. Keep in mind that many of the spot treatments contain chemicals that are known to be neurotoxins. Like most of the population, you did not read the label, nor would you recognize the names of any neurotoxins. And you probably would not know that neurotoxins can affect the brain. Your pet may develop a twitch from a neurotoxin.

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Don't you wonder if the same thing could happen to you? While the pet is in the most danger from this, the person applying it is not home free! This stuff can rub off and be distributed anywhere in the environment of the pet, affecting any life form in this environment. It is important to realize that the difference between poisons to kill fleas and poisons to kill higher life forms is simply the size of the dose. Since our bodies can store and accumulate poisons from the environment, we have no way of knowing what could be in store for us as a result of exposure to these poisons.

Recently, there were more than 28,000 sites, on just one search engine, on the internet related to pesticide poisoning from flea products. No matter what the reasons were, the poisoning happened because the products were available, and a reasonably logical person thought them safe for use. We readily accept whatever we are used to seeing. Harmful flea products are in the mainstream of our lives. Just go to any big food store, home improvement store, drug store, pet food store, and yes, even the Walmart, and you can find an arsenal for combating fleas.

Until 1990, I used everything available for flea control. After many bad experiences, I realized that I was declaring chemical warfare on my pets, my home, my yard, the environment, and on myself as well. Knowing that this had to stop, if I were going survive, I set out to find a pesticide-free way to keep fleas off my cats. My first step was to eliminate everything that had not worked for me in my war

against fleas. So, I had to forget all the flea products that I knew about. Living in Florida, meant combing off the fleas every hour if the cats went out on the screened porch, but I did it, in addition to wearing out a good vacuum cleaner. After a couple of years of trial and error, I developed a simple, cheap, and safe method that is so effective that the cats seem to be "invisible to fleas". Not only am I happy to be able to keep fleas off my cats, but I feel good about giving up my life of crime against the environment.

There are many sites on the internet where you can find out all the names of the harmful chemicals used in flea products. Anti-pesticide groups offer a lot of valuable information, as does the NRDC (National Resource Defense Council) and the CDC (Center for Disease Control). Even some animal rescue organizations post warning against certain products. Personally, I think that the terms **KEEP OUT OF THE REACH OF CHILDREN** and **WASH YOUR HANDS AFTER HANDLING** should give us the clues we need. Plain and simple, do not use these products, there is something unsafe about them. Trust me, the manufacturer is not just adding this information to make the label larger. There had to be a law somewhere that forced them to put these warnings on. Restrictions of this sort don't surface until harm has been done, and until a lot of action has been taken by environmental groups. Your best course of action is to do the research yourself. Do not wait for the mainstream (corporate) media to inform you about what to use to keep fleas off your pet. The information that they decide you should have is influenced by advertising dollars from the chemical industry.

Visit the NRDC flea product information sites and some Anti-pesticide group sites. They can be real eye openers. While you are looking at their sites, I hope you will take a few minutes to visit the **KEEP FLEAS OFF** site at: <http://www.liquorman.net/keepfleasoff/>

I suggest that you download information concerning the flea poisons, and use it as a guide to help protect your environment. After all, we are not just what we eat, but what we absorb through our skins

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and what we breathe into our lungs. Once a substance gets into your bloodstream, it has access to every cell that you own. One of the few powers, that you still have, is the power to control the environment in your home, USE IT!

Artist (clay and glass), originally from NC, but living in Florida for 20 years. Except for a few years she has always lived with cats.

Flea Control in dogs and cats

By Niall Kennedy

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Flea control can be a very hard thing to do especially if you live in areas where fleas are largely populated. Weather has a lot to do with fleas and trying to keep them outdoors and off of your pets can be very changeling.

You can try many of the products available to rid your pets of fleas and then find that you still have the problem. Fleas will lay their eggs in your carpet and on furniture and bedding that your pet happens to lie on.

The first step in flea control is to rid your pet of these blood sucking pests. Talk with your veterinarian to find out the best products available. You can have your pet dipped; buy flea collars, and other products that will eliminate the fleas from your pet.

Now, that your pet is flea free, how do you get rid of the fleas inside your home? You should now vacuum your entire home including any furniture that your pet has laid on. Once you vacuumed, be sure to throw the vacuum cleaner bag out immediately. The bag is probably full of fleas and you do not want to take the chance of them somehow finding their way out of the vacuum. If your pet has a pet bed, wash it completely or discard it and buy a new one. Any other bedding, towels, and rugs that your pet has been on also need to be cleaned.

Sometimes, the above steps may not be enough to rid your home of fleas. You may need to invest in an insecticide that can be used on carpets, baseboards, and cracks. Fleas can hide in very small places and if you have one flea, soon you will have many. Before using any type of insecticide, talk with your veterinarian to be sure that it is safe to use around your pet. You do not want your pet to ingest any type of toxic chemicals that could make them sick.

Niall Kennedy <http://www.pet-medication-supplies.net> Pet Medication Supplies can help you get the best possible protection for your pet. Advantix, Arthramine, Cosequin, Frontline, Heartgard – find the best deals in pet medication for flea and tick control, arthritis and lyme disease. Upto 50% discount everyday on brand names.

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