

June 2019

Flea and Tick Season is Here – Be Prepared!

Most gardening buffs look forward to spring and summer when the weather turns warmer and flowers bloom aplenty. However, to a dog or cat owner, these warmer months also spell the advent of flea and tick season. During this period, many tiny parasites appear into one's home and torture not just the pets but humans as well.

People in urban areas often wonder how their pets acquire fleas despite not being in contact with other animals. The answer lies in the fact that owners are usually walking the pet near tall grasses, weeds, trees etc. These trails/areas are invariably swarming with fleas and ticks and often the city public park maintenance is not up to required standards. The grass is rarely mowed or trimmed to a proper height. All this leads pets to be infested with fleas, ticks and other parasites. Therefore, it is essential for pet owners to provide clean, well maintained and hygienic surroundings for their pet, especially during the beginning of tick and flea season.

Refuse and garbage areas must be sealed, tightly shut and kept as clean as possible. This will limit wild animals from inhabiting these areas, so that there is lesser likelihood of them bringing in fleas and ticks.

- Bird baths and feeders also bring in ticks and fleas during the flea season. Try and limit these visitors in your yard and prevent them from sharing your pet's food or water.
- Lawns, trees and bushes must be well-trimmed. Garden fences may be used for limiting the pets' access to the garden areas.
- There are many flea and tick preventing solutions and sprays available for outdoor usage.
- If your pet is housed inside dog houses/kennels, make sure you clean these from time to time as these can be breeding grounds for parasites.
- Use flea/tick topicals or pills for the pets before the flea and tick season arrives, as these can also help prevent many parasitic infestations.

Spot-on or oral flea and tick preventionAnother important part of preparation for the flea and tick season includes spot-on application or chewable oral treatments for pets using preventive medications. Here are a few guidelines and safety precautions to follow when using these during the flea and tick season.

Talk to your vet about using a product that offers both flea and tick prevention (like [Frontline](#)).

- Do not use products meant for dogs on cats and vice-a-versa as some of these can be downright harmful to the other species.
- Follow the label instructions on the products and use the right quantity based on the weight of the animal.

- Use the product as prescribed during the flea season, as mentioned on the product label or by the vet.
- If your pet is sick, pregnant, lactating, old or diseased, talk to the vet about usage of the right preventive spot on treatment.
- Watch your pet closely especially if it is your first time using such products. Generally, hypersalivation is a common side effect, but if your pet starts to vomit or seems unusually lethargic or anxious, wash off the product immediately and seek veterinary help.
- If you have multiple pets, apply the product on both. Keep the pets separated for a few hours or until the product dries, else they might accidentally groom each other and ingest the product.

Remember: flea season usually peaks during the warmer months whereas some species of ticks can be found all-year round, depending on where you live. Therefore, it is best to use preventative flea and tick products right at the beginning of the flea season or as per the guidance and advice of a vet.