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How to Eliminate Fleas

We are seeing more fleas on our patients than in past years. The fleas will continue to worsen until Mother Nature gives us a couple of good, deep frosts.

For those of you who are seeing fleas on your pets, you must follow the steps outlined in this article to address the problem.

First for cats: Revolution (a topical medication) seems to do the best job if fleas are present. Use every month.

First for dogs: Begin a medication called Nexguard (this is a chewable pill given once monthly) that targets fleas AND ticks. It is available for dogs only. This is a prescription medication and only available through veterinarians.

Second: Treat your home with a good insecticide that has an IGR (insect growth regulator) to inhibit maturation of the immature flea stages. We sell the product, Knockout, which has worked well, but others are available at Lowe's/Home Depot type stores.

Vacuum thoroughly, wash your pet's bedding, and spray all areas of the home including furniture. Vacuum every 2-3 days and repeat the spraying process every 1-2 weeks for at least 3 treatments. Remember to empty and spray your vacuum receptacle after each use.

Fourth: Treat the yard. There are various insecticides available at Lowe's/Home Depot type stores for this purpose. Bayer Complete and Ortho Home Defense are examples of these products. Make certain to spray areas under decks, outbuildings and shady areas. Repeat this every 2-4 weeks, according to the label directions. Do your best to prevent wild or stray animals from entering your yard.

You must treat all pets in the household and do not allow untreated pets to visit your home. Even if you are not actually SEEING fleas, they ARE in your environment. Flea eggs are the size of a salt grain and contaminate any areas that your pet frequents. As the eggs hatch, larva and pupa stages occur and eventually mature into adult fleas. Please comb all pets in the household and look for flea fecal material within the hair coat. The fecal material looks like black pepper and if placed on a wet, white paper towel, will leave reddish spots due to the blood the flea feeds on.

