

Derm Digest

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Animal Dermatology Clinic
Advancing the Art of Veterinary Dermatology

June 2012

Fleas in Full Force

Many choices for flea control



Photo: Nakul Gupta/stockvault

There are many options when it comes to flea control. According to a study pet owners spend \$9 billion a year to combat fleas and once you start shopping for flea control, the choices seem nearly endless! Here are some of the most popular types available. Please ask your veterinarian for guidance when choosing this or any medication for your pet and closely follow guidelines for use of the product as stated on the package.

Topicals These are liquids applied between the shoulders or the base of the skull of the pet, sometimes call "spot-ons". These can last for several weeks and some (depending on the ingredient) are effective in repelling fleas as well as ticks and mosquitoes. Some have the added feature of continued performance even if your pet goes swimming or gets bathed. Advanced formulas have been recently produced that are only available from your veterinarian.

Pros: Very effective treatment, easy to apply, some water resistance

Cons: Most costly of all treatments

Sprays An economical way to go and can last up to several days as long as the pet stays dry but need to be repeated. Easy to apply, but be careful around the eyes and mouth.

Pros: Inexpensive

Cons: Pet must stay dry.

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My View: The Art of Veterinary Dermatology

As the Marketing Manager for Animal Dermatology Clinic I have, over the years, learned a great deal of the intricacies of veterinary dermatology and have seen some amazing results taken place with patients after being referred to Animal Dermatology Clinic. My employment does not make me a veterinary expert in any way, nor do I profess to have any medical skills, in fact I approach my diabetic cat like a hunter stalking a deer, fearing that any unusual noise or movement will cause one or both of us to lose our nerve in the administration of his insulin injection. Essentially, I am a regular pet owner, just like you.

Working here, I was always intrigued by the "art" of a science. I understood that there could be many paths to a solution but I learned later *how* that journey is taken is where the art of the profession is applied and in veterinary dermatology, that is very much the case.

Did you know that nearly every veterinarian can submit a blood allergy test for your pet? A number of pet owners have attempted to help their allergic pet by allergy testing through a laboratory, receive the results of the test and then based upon those results a course of treatment is administered. If there is little or no change in the pet's condition, the owner declares "I've tried allergy testing, it didn't work for my pet." It is true that for intradermal allergy injections the success rate is about 70% for dogs and 60% for cats, but according to Dr. Chris Reeder (Animal Dermatology Clinic - Louisville, KY) "The individual animal must be treated with specific adjustments and fine tuning of allergy injections. This is truly where the "art" of veterinary dermatology takes place. How, when and why allergy injections need to be adjusted can "make or break" how well the animal does clinically. The allergy test is only a piece of the puzzle and is used primarily as a recipe card for what to include in allergy mixtures for injections. The test alone does not mean an animal has allergies as other criteria also need to be met."

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Flea Control *(continued)*

Shampoos Flea shampoos will wash away adult fleas and their eggs but it does not offer a long term control. Apply the shampoo to a lather and allow it to stay in contact for at least 10-15 minutes before rinsing thoroughly.

Pros: Immediate removable of fleas and eggs

Cons: No preventative, infestation will recur

Powders Powders are dusted over the entire body and rubbed into the fur and are far less effective. Avoid the eyes and mouth. Side effects of powders may include vomiting, diarrhea, drooling, depression, lack of appetite and shaking.

Pros: Easy to apply

Cons: Potential side effects, pet must stay dry to maintain effectiveness

Dips A dip is a solution that applied to the animal with a sponge or poured over the body to kill fleas and ticks. Usually the product comes in a concentrate and then diluted for use. The pet is allowed to air dry. Depending on the product they may not be used on very young animals or on nursing or pregnant animals. Some people may also be sensitive to these products.

Pros: Relatively inexpensive

Cons: Cumbersome application and potential side effects

Collars Fleas collars use a concentrate to repel fleas and ticks but again are generally poorly effective. Could be most effective if they came small enough to put around the neck of the flea! Relatively inexpensive but could be strong smelling and some pets have contact irritation.

Pros: Inexpensive

Cons: Strong smell, possible skin irritation, mostly ineffective

Oral There's a pill for that! Oral medication is available which has multiple functions to kill fleas and prevent heartworm disease in dogs and cats. Even internal parasites can be killed with some oral medications.

Pros: Easy administration

Cons: Possible vomiting or diarrhea.

Prescription treatments tend to be most effective and safer than over-the-counter options, but regardless of which option you choose, you can boost the effectiveness of your pet's flea treatment by also treating the areas your pet frequents. When vacuuming, be sure to include the area under sofas where fleas and flea eggs may lie. Wash bedding or areas where you pet sleeps. For outdoors, pet-safe treatments are also available for yards.

My View: The Art (continued)

Like snowflakes, each pet is unique, but you knew that, right? In veterinary dermatology that uniqueness is often taken into consideration when approaching diagnosis and treatment, although some owners are inclined to believe that treatment of a disease is like fixing a mechanical object or treating any other known condition: you have an infection, take an antibiotic. In the case of the client who stated in an on-line review, "...As a biologist...I have a hard time believing that each case is a unique, never seen before, stand-alone case, which seems to be the position taken by (Animal Dermatology Clinic)...". This is not to single out biologists for their incredulity; that could be changed to any profession: "As a plumber, I have a hard time believing...", you get the idea. But in fact, even using my example of antibiotics for infection, there are a wide variety of antibiotics from which to select and there is the possibility that the infection is resistant to certain antibiotics. Which to choose? (Hint: Don't ask the biologist.)

I received an e-mail from a gentleman who believed that his dog had Pemphigus foliaceus (PF). If you have seen some of the pictures of patients with this disease, it is a sad and debilitating condition. He saw pictures on our website of pets with PF that had been treated. He wanted to know exactly what medication was used so that he could treat his dog, otherwise he was going to euthanize him. The medication used for PF is widely available and can be obtained from most veterinarians, but it is the dosage, the monitoring, and follow-up that is critical in bringing resolution to the condition, which without meticulous oversight could result in added medical complications or even death. I spoke to Dr. Reeder about this case, "There are many factors to watch for when treating an animal with any autoimmune skin disease as the treatment often requires immunosuppressive medications to control the disease. Many will need to have blood work, urinalysis and regular rechecks to monitor their clinical improvement."

Of course, I could not advise him on medication, although for the sake of his pet, I wish it were that easy.

There are many more examples of how the doctors for Animal Dermatology Clinic apply their skills to discover and recognize the subtle differences of skin diseases and their approach and application to recovery is the art that creates the picture to a healthier pet.

Don Fruta, Marketing Manager

Comments? Does your pet have story of a difficult or chronic condition that was resolved at Animal Dermatology Clinic that you would like to share?

E-mail me at dfruta@adcmg.com

Allergen Pictorial Reference Added to Website

What the heck is Lambs Quarter?

After a pet undergoes a blood allergy test or skin test, the doctor evaluates the reactions to the allergens and identifies the top items to formulate the antigen solution. At first glance, many of the allergens in the test are common insects, weeds and trees, but what the heck is Lambs Quarter (*Chenopodium album*)? And pigweed (*Amaranthus*)?

On our website at www.animaldermatology.com under Client Tips & Information, items in an allergy test are now listed with a representative image of the allergen.

Some allergens are regional. For instance, the perennial weed "dog fennel" (*Eupatorium capillifolium*) is commonly found in the Southeast and is part of the allergy test for our eastern clinics. It does not grow on the West Coast, therefore it is not included in the California allergy skin test.

The dandelion on the other hand is a vigorous weed found across the U.S. and is included in allergy skin tests at every clinic. Each unique allergy skin test for a particular regional area is shown on the website.

The list is still under construction and constantly updated as images are located. Readers are invited to submit images that they own if they have a picture of an allergen that does not have an active link.



Looks like *Tyrophagus putrescentiae* but it's actually *Acarus siro*! Photo credit: Gilles San Martin

A cat, after being scolded, goes about its business. A dog slinks off into a corner and pretends to be doing a serious self-reappraisal.

~Robert Brault

Special Pet Days in the June

Mark your calendars for the following:

Adopt-a-Cat Month® From the American Humane Association

Adopt-a-Shelter Cat Month. From the ASPCA

National Pet Preparedness Month. Coincides with the first month of hurricane season, reminding pet owners to be prepared in the event of a hurricane, tornado, flood or other natural disaster.

June 4. Hug Your Cat Day.

1st Week in June. Pet Appreciation Week

June 10. World Pet Memorial Day.

June 17 - 23 Animal Rights Awareness Week

June 22. Take Your Dog to Work Day. This special event from Pet Sitters International encourages workers to take their dogs to work one day to celebrate and promote pet adoptions.

Pet pictures needed! Have you submitted a picture of your pet? Go to our site at www.animaldermatology.com and upload a picture into our Pet Gallery. We would love to have your pet included in the gallery! Problems uploading? Send a message via the Contact Page and

Pet Events in Your Area

The following events are listed for informational purposes only. Please contact the organization prior to attending as schedules may change without notice. Animal Dermatology Clinic has no affiliation with these events.

Orange County, CA

18th Annual DAWG Walk & Pet Faire

Saturday, June 23

8:00a to 12:00p at Oso Creek Trail, Mission Viejo, CA

Price: \$25 per person by June 19 & \$30 on event day

Age Suitability: All Ages

Take a lovely walk on the Oso Creek Trail and attend the popular Pet Faire featuring local businesses, animal rescues, booths, music entertainment, raffle prizes, refreshments, dog adoptions and much more! Hosted by the City of Mission Viejo and Dedicated Animal Welfare Group (DAWG). Proceeds benefit the Mission Viejo Animal Services Center, which also services Laguna Niguel. No fee required to attend pet faire.

Pasadena, CA

Saturday, June 23

(10am-3pm)—**15th Annual Basset Hound Spring**

Games— Ring events: Synchronized Swim, Treat Toss, Costume Contest, Agility Course, kissing contest, and more. Come enjoy the games, shopping, BBQ and large raffle. Info: www.bhrsc.org Event location: Arcadia Park, corner of Santa Anita Ave and Huntington Drive. Event sponsor: Basset Hound Rescue Southern California

Noblesville, IN

June 23, 2012

9:00 AM - Registration at 8:00 AM to Noon

Admission: \$25 per Dog and Owner

Benefiting: American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society Bark For Life™ is a noncompetitive walk event for dogs and their owners to raise funds and awareness for the American Cancer Society's fight against cancer. By supporting Bark For Life, you help the American Cancer Society save lives, and that helps us move closer to our ultimate goal of a world with less cancer and more birthdays. So bring your best canine friend and join us for a fun-filled day starting with a walk, and then continuing with demonstrations, contests, and games.

For more information, please call 317-344-7828 or email kelly.alford@cancer.org.

San Diego, CA

June 10, 2012

9am to 4pm

Admission: N/A

4th Annual Doggie Street Festival will be held on Sunday June 10, 2012 at Robb Field. This is Southern California's largest dog & cat adoption focused festival which will include delicious food, music, pet products, kids art area, photo booth, and fun for the entire family. Join us and together we can advocate to help end pet homelessness. Rescue groups from throughout San Diego County will be in attendance with adoptable dogs & cats. For more information, please call 619-276-4142 or email doggiestreet@gmail.com.

Covington, KY

July 21, 2012

10AM to 4PM

Admission: \$25 non-profit / \$75 for profit / \$100

Concessionaires

Benefiting: KENTON CO. ANIMAL SHELTER & KENTON PAW PARK

Pioneer Park Beast Bash is the first Mid-Summer Pet Event in the Tri-State area catering to pets and their owners. Contests, pet related vendors, pet communicator, canine demonstrations, pool party at the Kenton Paw Park, numerous kids activities and concessions are just some of the features. An estimated 2000+ people and their pets are expected to attend this festival. For more information: 859-356-7400 or email dan.evans@kentoncounty.org

Marietta, GA

Jun 23, 2012 to Jun 24, 2012

11:00 to 5:00

Admission: \$5.00

Benefiting: DREAM Dachshund Rescue

The Georgia Dachshund Races will be on June 23-24, 2012 at Jim Miller Park in Marietta. All proceeds will go to DREAM Dachshund Rescue, DREAMrescue.org. Enter your dachshund or watch SAFE dachshund races along with costume, coat, nose, size, and obstacle course contest. Family fun! See GeorgiaDachshundRaces.com for registration and more information or call 770-934-2853. For more information, please call 770-934-2853 or email GaDachshundRaces@bellsouth.net.