**Treating Fleas** 

If your pet is chewing at their hind-end/tail base area, or if you are noticing a lot of ‘dirt specks’ on your pet, there is a chance they have fleas. A flea comb (a very fine toothed comb) is the easiest way to confirm the presence of fleas.

Your **first** step should be to put them, as well as any other housemates, on a flea and tick preventative (F/TP) as soon as possible. We carry Effipro at our hospital (a generic of frontline).

Optional: You can also give them a bath, but flea and tick shampoo is not the only shampoo you can use, as this can be quite drying to the skin. There is no residual effect from using a F/T shampoo specifically. Any shampoo will help drown the adult fleas and assist in rinsing them off your pet. Apply topical prevention a day or two after/before bathing.

Optional: *Nitenpyram (*brand name: *Capstar*)*.* This is an OTC oral medication that kills the adult fleas on your pet at this current moment. This will not continue to kill fleas for longer than a half a day. Follow package directions. Use in tandem with Topical F/TP.

If your pet has multiple fleas (10+) or multiple pets in the household have fleas, your **second** step should be to *treat your house.* This is not an indication of the cleanliness of your house, simply how fleas live in the environment. Only 10% of fleas live on your pet (the adults), the rest of the life stages are in bedding/soft upholstery/carpet in the household.Wash all bedding, towels, clothes, and any rugs that can be with hot soapy water. Then, turn on the lights and turn up the heat. Vacuum once prior to treatment, emptying the vacuum out immediately after. Light/heat/vibration helps hatch the cocoon, which is highly resistant to treatments.

Next, use an environmental spray with an insect growth regulator for adults and pre adults (contains either; methoprene, nylar, or pyriproxyfen). We carry one in the hospital but there are others available. Allow it to sit for recommended contact time, then vacuum everywhere, continuing to empty the vacuum out.

You can choose to use a flea ‘bomb’ but we don't recommend them as they can miss some areas completely.

And lastly, your **third** and most important step will be to repeat the environmental treatment after **two weeks**, as flea cocoons are resistant to the spray in the first sweep, and this gives them the time to hatch and be able to be affected better by the treatment but before the next generation enters their cocoon state. In the winter/cold or if you think you had a large infestation, you may wanna do an additional third treatment another two weeks following this second treatment as they can be harder to eliminate during this time.

**When to bring them to the Vet**

If your pet is incessantly itching themselves or they are starting to have skin damage or fur loss, you should strongly consider bringing them in to the vet. They could be having an allergic reaction or sensitivity to flea bites in addition to having the fleas. They can also sometimes get secondary infections due to their scratching as well.

**Preventing Fleas and Ticks**

There are multiple brands and versions of flea and tick prevention on the market place. The version that we consider best are topical brands. This includes the monthly drops down the back as well as *S*eresto collars. Topicals both kill and repel fleas and ticks. The other common version on the market place is a monthly oral flea and tick prevention. Orals kill fleas and ticks when they bite your pet. There are FDA warnings on all oral flea and tick preventatives that show evidence of potential neurological effects, and for that reason, we do not recommend orals. It's always best to research the prevention you are wanting to use, and we are available to consult with you as well, to find the best option for you and your pet.

*PSA*: We do NOT recommend “traditional” flea collars. They only tend to work about 6 in on either side of the collar.