Oral Flea Medications vs. Topical Flea Medications

by Robert Wilson

Article published on December 27th 2011 | Pets

If there's one thing dog owners know, it's that the whole household is happy when Fido is flea-free. Luckily, modern veterinary technology makes flea control very easy. There's Comfortis, for example, the oral flea medication that starts killing fleas within minutes after the dog has taken the tablet. There are also a number of topical medications, like Frontline Plus, which are also extremely effective.

With so many options, it can be hard to choose between different oral and topical flea medications. What are the differences? What are the risks of each, if any? Here's a look at the different available flea treatments for dogs.

Least Effective Flea Treatments

The least effective way to treat your dog's fleas is through flea shampoos. Although the flea shampoos will indeed kill off the fleas currently living on your dog's skin, the shampoo comes off when your dog is rinsed. There is no lasting prevention provided by a flea shampoo.

The advantage to a flea shampoo, though, is that no residual effect means that there is little chance your dog's skin will continue to be irritated by the shampoo â€“ a concern that many pet owners have about certain topical treatments.

More Effective Flea Treatments

Without a doubt, the topical flea treatments that are applied between the shoulder blades of a dog or cat are far more effective than shampoos and flea collars. Most of the topical flea treatments on the market today remain effective in repelling fleas for about a month, even after rain exposure or a bath.

However, there is growing concern over the long-term effects of these topical treatments on dogs and cats. After all, the medication in a topical treatment is a chemical pesticide. Some pet owners have animals who have had adverse reactions to these topical treatments. Although the risk to dogs and cats is quite small, and in most cases the benefits far outweigh the risks, pet owners should nonetheless be aware that topical treatments can be contraindicated in some cases.

Most Effective Flea Treatments

Oral flea medications, such as Comfortis and Program, are widely considered by experts to be highly effective while putting pets at the least amount of risk.

Vets particularly recommend oral medications like Comfortis for dogs who are chronically at risk for fleas. Some dogs seem to attract fleas more than others, while others live in flea-prone environments. For animals who may need flea medication only a few times per year, a topical medication is a good solution. For animals who need flea medication year-round, oral medications are the right choice.

Not all of the oral flea medications can be purchased over the counter; Comfortis and other oral medications typically require a prescription from a veterinarian.

What's your experience with flea prevention methods? Is there one medication you'd highly recommend, or a medication you'd urge fellow pet owners to stay away from? Share your wisdom

below.

Article Source:
http://www.articleside.com/pets-articles/oral-flea-medications-vs-topical-flea-medications.htm - Article Side

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A former pet shop manager and life-long dog lover, Robbie Wilson has extensive experience in helping people with their dogs, cats and other pets. Keeping pets healthy with pet meds like a Comfortis is her passion. For information on the latest pet treatments, she often turns to http://www.petcarerx.com.

Article Keywords:
Frontline for dogs,Heartgard for dogs,Interceptor

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