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How To Fight Fleas (Ticks & Mosquitoes) Holistically

By Sheryl Normandeau

Keep your pet itch-free by taking a well-rounded holistic approach to fighting fleas and other pests.

Have you ever heard the term “integrated pest management”? It sounds rather dry and intimidating, but it’s actually a holistic strategy for dealing with the threat of insects and diseases in plants. It operates on the tenet that healthy plants are rarely targeted by pests, and takes into account the entire well-being of the plant and everything it needs for optimal growth – soil, water, light and nutrition. Any controls required are applied with minimal impact to the environment.

Of course, pets aren’t plants. But when it comes to flea and tick control, we can draw inspiration from the integrated pest management concept. By taking a



fully-rounded holistic approach that goes far beyond what is offered by conventional flea prevention medications, you can not only help keep pest populations down, but also ensure your pet is so healthy he won’t suffer from the few bites he might get.

7 Ways to Boost Immunity

As with plants (or any other living being, for that matter), healthy pets are far less prone to being attacked by insect pests. Fleas and ticks are much more likely to go after animals that are sick. By keeping your pet in top notch condition, you can help make him less attractive to parasites.

1. Diet

A varied, [high quality diet](#) rich in vitamins and minerals and free of fillers, by-products and additives is crucial. Supplements of “super greens” such as fresh wheatgrass or barley grass are good, as are blue-green algae such as spirulina and chlorella. Fresh veggies contain beneficial enzymes and vitamins, as well as chlorophyll, an excellent antioxidant. When feeding fruit and vegetables to your pet, ensure they’re thoroughly washed to eliminate pesticide residue.

2. Supplements

Some holistic veterinarians recommend the use of [garlic](#) and brewer’s yeast to help repel fleas. Dogs and cats also require Omega-3 fatty acids. These have anti-inflammatory properties that help combat allergies. Use a high quality fish oil.

3. Clean water

A fresh, clean source of [water](#) is also extremely important. Use pure, filtered water, and change it frequently so it stays fresh. Ensure all food and water dishes are cleaned regularly. A case may be made for using metal bowls, since they aren’t porous and are therefore less likely to trap bacteria. Use phosphate-free soap.



4. Exercise

It is essential to give your pet regular [exercise](#) and [playtime](#). Physical and mental stimulation are beneficial to health. Schedule time with your pet as you would with a child, and make it fun and meaningful. Ensure toys are washed regularly in hot, soapy water.

5. Grooming

Regular [grooming](#) not only contributes to your pet’s overall health; it’s also a good way to check for signs of fleas or ticks. A clean, healthy coat and skin are also less likely to harbor these parasites. Clean grooming tools between uses.

6. Limit toxins

Avoid the use of chemicals in your home and yard. Rethink everything from toilet bowl cleaners and ant traps to air fresheners and hairspray. [Toxins](#) are everywhere and pets can easily collect harmful residues on their coats and paws, and then ingest them when self-cleaning. Toxins can severely impact the immune system and contribute to disease.

Last but not least, always avoid [over-vaccination](#)!

Prevention — House and Yard Maintenance

Indoors

Flea larvae are minuscule and can live in cracks in the floor, or in the fibers of rugs, blankets or upholstery.

- Regularly wash all soft fabric surfaces in hot water and phosphate-free soap, and if possible, put them in the drier on a hot setting.

- Frequently steam-clean rugs, but be careful not to use harsh cleaning products. Vacuum carpets daily and immediately dispose of the collected debris in the bag or canister. Don't miss the dark spaces beneath couches and beds, where flea larvae like to hide.

- If at all possible, wall-to-wall carpeting should be replaced with hard flooring, which can be swept on a daily basis. Many flooring types can be cleaned and disinfected with a solution of warm water and vinegar.



Outdoors

Fleas and ticks aren't the only pests to be found outdoors. Mosquitoes and other flying, biting or stinging insects may also cause your pet trouble.

- Fleas and ticks love tall grass, so keep your lawn mowed and free of leaf litter.
- Beneficial nematodes can help get rid of fleas in your yard.
- Practice integrated pest management on your garden: keep grass and plants healthy to discourage harmful insects.
- Eliminate sources of standing water to deter mosquitoes.
- Try attracting insect-eating birds and bats to your yard by creating safe habitations.
- Ants are voracious eaters of flea larvae and shouldn't be disturbed outside. If you have problems with them in house, do not use toxic traps and sprays that could harm your pet. Research more natural alternatives. For example, ants hate fresh sliced cucumbers and will move away in a hurry.
- Make sure the house is well sealed, with caulking in window and door frames and other entry points.

While it's true you can't completely eradicate fleas and ticks, you can go a long way to protecting your dog and/or cat with this far-reaching holistic approach. Keep them healthy, strong and active...do what you can to make your home and yard unfriendly to fleas, ticks and other pests...and avoid using toxic chemicals to combat them if they do arise.

Adapted from: <https://animalwellnessmagazine.com/fight-fleas-holistically/>

Images: <https://www.health.com/>, <https://www.happypetsinfo.com/>