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Natural Solutions for Pet Pests (Fleas, Ticks & Mosquitoes)

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Fleas, ticks, heartworms, mosquitoes – warmer weather means these pests will be looking for a piece of your dog or cat. Some can cause serious illness, never mind itching and irritation, so take steps to protect him, the natural way.

Over the last 35 years of being an integrative veterinarian, I have developed a holistic approach to fleas, ticks, mosquitoes and the other pests that plague my patients. Healthier animals rarely attract many pests, especially fleas and mosquitoes; if and when they do get infected with an insect-transmitted illness, they recover rapidly with natural therapies. My goal, then, is to build health and have a multitude of gentle, safe options (for animals, humans and the planet) to offer my canine and feline patients, reserving the “chemical of the year” for unique circumstances. Alternative pest repellent strategies include nutrition, herbs, essential oils and more, and can be topically or orally administered and/or used to also treat the environment.



Nutrition and supplements for preventing pests

Since improving health is key to preventing attack from pests, good nutrition is vitally important. As always, start with the healthiest, highest-quality, whole foods-based diet you can afford. The food shouldn't contain any of the cheap ingredients, fillers or artificial additives that can degrade your pet's well-being.

Supplements to boost health as well as repel bugs:

1. Garlic has been used for centuries to prevent infestations in people and animals, as well as to eliminate parasites. While there are some safety concerns if huge quantities are fed, garlic has been proven safe and effective in many animals. Add to food or give in supplement form; apply topically and use it to spray the yard. Duration lasts up to a month with some products.
2. Noni is very palatable and effective, for all species.

3. Apple cider vinegar (organic is best) can be added to food and water or applied topically for mosquitoes.

Flea tags:

These high-tech collar tags make use of energy fields that are harmless to pets but whose frequencies serve to repel bugs. For example, the EasyDefense Flea & Tick Tag from [Only Natural Pet](#) uses the dog's own bio-energy to send out pest-repelling frequencies and keep fleas, ticks and mosquitoes away, without the use of any chemicals.

Essential oils:

Many essential oils repel bugs. For example:

- Rose geranium is known for repelling ticks. Put one drop in a carrier oil (e.g. coconut or olive oil) on your hands, rub your dog around the neck and shoulders, and you should see no ticks for a few weeks.
- Cedar is another good repellent, and is often used in products specifically formulated for repelling fleas, ticks and other pests.

Additional essential oils that will keep bugs at bay include lavender, eucalyptus, rosemary, lemongrass and tea tree. Never use essential oils at full strength – they must always be diluted in a carrier oil. Take great care using essential oils around cats.

Mechanical methods

Mechanical ways to deal with pests include:

1. Tick pullers – these simple handheld tools feature small hooks or notches designed to get hold of the tick and remove it from the skin with a twisting or sliding motion.
2. Diatomaceous earth products – DE is a powder made from fossilized aquatic organisms called diatoms. These diatoms have sharp edges that cut through the exoskeletons of fleas and ticks, desiccating and killing them. Diatomaceous earth products must be food grade so they can be applied topically and in the house.

As our concerns about toxic chemicals escalate, you have a growing number of safe alternative pest prevention products to choose from. And you can use them in combination to cover all the bases. For example, if you live near a swampy area filled with mosquitoes during the summer, a flea tag for your dog's collar, along with a yard spray made with garlic or cedar oil (not to mention a healthy diet and lifestyle to keep his immunity strong) will help protect him from heartworm. A holistic approach to pest control does require more work on your part, but it pays for itself ten times over with a healthy, happy, pest-free dog or cat.

Source: <https://animalwellnessmagazine.com/natural-solutions-pet-pests/>

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