

Flea Shampoos, Sprays and Mousses

Flea shampoos, sprays and dips are valuable tools in a flea-control program. Learn the benefits of each.

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A flea collar alone may not be enough to provide complete relief, particularly in cases of heavy flea infestations.

Dry, foam-type flea shampoos can be particularly useful for cats that hate being bathed, Johnson said. "Just put a dollop of it in your palm, rub it into their fur, and then maybe take a wet wash cloth to help get some of the dirt and dander out," she advised.

Flea sprays are probably the next most popular flea products after shampoos and collars, Johnson added.

Many over-the-counter flea products contain pyrethrins, a substance derived from the chrysanthemum flower with a quick knockdown effect on fleas but a relatively short duration of activity. Synthetic versions are also used and give a similar quick-kill but tend to be somewhat longer-acting. Water-based or reduced-alcohol formula mousses and sprays are advertised as being gentler if your cat's skin has already been irritated by biting fleas.

Another common ingredient found in flea shampoos is d-limonene, a citrus-based flea killer considered quite safe.

Sprays, dips, shampoos and mousses all help give your pet immediate relief by killing the biting adults, explained Elizabeth Curry-Galvin, DVM, technical services veterinarian for Sandoz Animal Health, makers of Zodiac flea control products. But it's important not to stop there. Look for products that contain an insect growth regulator to kill flea eggs and break the flea life cycle, she advised.

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