

What Is the Best Way to Apply Flea Repellent?

CatChannel expert Arnold Plotnick, DVM, gives an update on the latest flea-control methods.

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Q: Do you have any suggestions on how to hold your cat and apply flea repellent — either with another person helping or alone? Our cats are used to being handled but still get panicky and hard to hold. We are senior citizens who took in three strays when they were young; they are about 4 years old now and we have never mastered this.

A: The days of holding a panicky cat still while spraying or powdering it with flea repellent are over. Modern flea control is very advanced, and treating fleas is easily accomplished by applying a topical flea-control product once a month to the skin on the back of your cat's neck. These products (such as Frontline, Advantage, Revolution) can be obtained from your veterinarian. Never use a flea-control product labeled for dogs on a cat. These products may contain highly concentrated permethrin which can be toxic (even deadly) to your cat. If your cat is crawling with fleas, there is a pill (called Capstar) that you can get from your vet that, when given orally, will kill all the fleas on the cat within a couple of minutes. Once the fleas are dead, application of the topical flea-control product will prevent further infestation. After 30 days, you simply apply the next dose.