

## EPA Continues to Evaluate Flea, Tick Products

**Also, ASPCA report says cats more susceptible to illness, death as a result of misuse of spot-on treatments.**

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The EPA urges pet owners to carefully follow label directions and to monitor their pets for adverse reactions after application of flea and tick products. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently asked the manufacturers of spot-on flea and tick products for pets to provide additional detailed data on reported incidents, including breed, weight, age and sex of pet; whether the pet was treated by a veterinarian; whether the product was applied according to the label; whether this was the first time the pet owner used the product; and whether the pet was being treated with other medications or pesticides; among others.

Adverse reactions reported in relation to the spot-on products range from skin irritation to seizures and in some cases death, according to the EPA.

The EPA, which implemented a July deadline for the data, also requested information on market share and numbers of incidents per doses or packages sold.

The request is part of the agency's "increased scrutiny" of spot-on flea and tick control products in both the over-the-counter and veterinary channel to determine if further restrictions on such products are needed.

The EPA had announced in April that it was intensifying its evaluation due to recent increases in the number of reported incidents. About 44,000 potential incidents associated with registered spot-on products were reported to the agency in 2008.

Federal law requires EPA registrants to submit reports of possible adverse reactions that may be related to the use of their products, whether or not the products were used properly and according to label instructions. A report does not necessarily mean the product caused the symptoms.

Although flea and tick product incidents can involve the use of spot-ons, sprays, collars and shampoos, the majority of incidents reported to the EPA are related to EPA-registered spot-on products.

Spot-ons are generally sold in tubes or vials and are applied to one or more localized areas on the pet, such as between the shoulders or in a stripe along the back. The active ingredients in these products are amitraz, cyphenothrin, dinotefuron, etofenprox, fipronil, imidicloprid, metaflumizone, permethrin, pyriproxyfen and S-methoprene.

The EPA, which has posted a list of spot-on products, reiterated that it is not recalling products nor is it suggesting that these products not be used.

The EPA urged pet owners to carefully follow label directions and to monitor their pets for adverse reactions after application, particularly when using a product for the first time. The EPA also recommended that pet owners consult a veterinarian about "the responsible and effective use of flea and tick products."

In related news, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals recently released data demonstrating that cats are more susceptible to illness and death as a result of the misuse of spot-on flea and tick control products.

The data, collected by the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center, revealed that when cats were not treated per label directions, they are significantly more likely to experience severe reactions: no illness despite a call to the ASPCA (18 percent), mild illness (17 percent), moderate illness (45 percent), major illness (19 percent) and death (2 percent).

"Products labeled for dogs must never be used on cats — doing so can result in serious illness and even death," said Louise Murray, DVM, medical director of the ASPCA's Bergh Memorial Animal Hospital. "A veterinarian must always be consulted before using spot-on flea and tick treatments on very young, old, sick or pregnant pets."

