

## Parasite Control

**Safeguard your cat and home against pesky parasites such as fleas, ticks and mosquitoes.**

*Arnold Plotnick, DVM*

Posted: Tue Mar 29 00:00:00 PST 2005

Warmer weather, usually a fun time for people, can be a miserable time for cats. The change in climate encourages pesky parasites such as fleas, ticks and mosquitoes. At best, these critters can make your kitty uncomfortable; at worst, they can transmit dangerous diseases. Frustrating Fleas Few creatures that live on earth today have had as much impact on world history as the common flea. From the Black Death during the 14th century to the present, fleas have caused much grief. Fleas make your cat itch, especially if it's allergic to flea bites. In fact, flea allergy dermatitis is the most prevalent small-animal skin disease. Fleas, which sometimes carry tapeworm eggs, can transmit tapeworms to cats if ingested. "Though we haven't figured out how to completely eliminate fleas, in the last few years science has made some tremendous advances in helping pets and their owners cope with these annoying parasites," says Chantal Acosta, DVM, a veterinarian with Country Vets in New York City. The most effective approach to flea control remains the three-step method: 1. Treat the yard. Excellent compounds are available that you can apply directly to the soil in moist, shady areas around the house where immature fleas most likely live. These compounds are reasonably priced, long lasting and environmentally friendly. 2. Treat the home. In severe cases, you can apply safe and effective compounds directly to carpets and upholstered furniture. However, in most instances, it's sufficient to vacuum and thoroughly wash your cat's bedding. 3. Treat your cat. In recent years, several effective products have been introduced to combat the war on fleas. Many of these products are applied to the cat's skin once a month. Some are given orally. Talk to your veterinarian about which product is right for your cat, because each product has different benefits. Also, never use dog products on a cat.