

Preparing for flea and tick season



Article brought to you by Dr Alice Marshall, Registered Veterinarian (NSW VSB)

Spring has sprung and so too have fleas, ticks and other warm-weather skin irritators. As it warms up, your pet will naturally spend more time outside, which means more contact with these parasites and more exposure to other skin allergens.

Here are some tips to help ensure that both you and your pet can start summer off on the right foot.

Fleas

A flea or tick infestation could quickly ruin both you and your pet's summer. To prevent irritation and infestation from fleas, year-round protection is ideal. If you don't currently use a product, look for a one which immediately kills adult fleas. However, as adult fleas are only 5% of the total flea population, you will need a product which also kills flea eggs and all larval/developing flea stages. Together these stages make up 95% of the flea population – and are all based in your pet's environment – think carpets, floorboards, pet beds, outdoor areas etc.

Many products contain ingredients which kill all stages of the flea cycle, so check the product label information to ensure you have all stages covered. If you are confused, give us a call so

we can help recommend the best product for your pet and their lifestyle, often many of which pets share with you and the family.

Ticks

Paralysis ticks are found right down the East coast of Australia and have also been found in parts of Victoria. Pet owners who live in areas infested with paralysis ticks know how dangerous ticks can be. However, COVID travel restrictions might mean holidaying with your pet to new places in your home state – keep in mind that paralysis ticks may be prevalent in new areas you visit. If you are holidaying away from your usual spots, feel free to call our practice for some advice. Owners taking pets to coastal areas should start their pets on a tick control product at least two weeks before leaving home, to ensure the product is working at an effective level.

There are multiple products for sale to combat ticks – “spot-ons,” sprays/ rinses, collars and tablets – give us a call to identify the right one for your pet. Even when using a product, pets should still be checked for ticks every day, as no product can guarantee 100% protection. If you find a tick or if your pet shows any wobbliness,

weakness or other unusual behaviour, contact us immediately for advice. Prevention is always better than cure, as well as being more cost-effective a pro-active tick prevention program can help your pet to avoid the dangers of tick paralysis.

Other skin irritants

Grasses, plants and pollens can all cause skin irritations in our pets. The areas along the underside of your pet with less hair – groin, stomach, armpits – as well as their face and ears, can be most commonly affected. Once touched, some plants and grasses can rapidly cause a severe allergy. Scratching at the area can cause a skin infection, which may require a visit to us for some anti-inflammatories and possibly antibiotics. To combat these potential irritants, owners can identify and remove problem plants from gardens and monitor their pets for any early signs of irritation. Rinsing your pet's skin with water will also help remove allergens from their skin/ feet and can help prevent itching and scratching. If in any doubt contact us and remember that as well as being cheaper in the long-run, prevention is also better for your pets health and wellbeing.

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