

KEEP

FLEAS

OFF YOUR PETS AND OUT OF YOUR HOME

1. Keep them out

- Frequently vacuum floors, carpets, and furniture
- Wash pet and human bedding
- Regularly clean or caulk cracks and crevices in floors and baseboards

2. Monitor

- Use flea traps to monitor your household
- Check your pet for fleas using a flea comb and a dish of soapy water, which will also get rid of any adult fleas

3. Treat your pets

- Wash your pet with pesticide-free shampoo and warm water
- Instead of topical treatment, ask your veterinarian if oral treatment is an option

FINDING FLEAS IN THE HOME

- Adult fleas spend much of their time on an animal's body. If you haven't seen fleas but your dog or cat is scratching, your pet may have fleas.
- You may be able to see tiny white flea eggs and white, worm-like flea larvae on the floor, in cracks and crevices, in carpets, and where pets rest or sleep. You may also see "flea dirt" (flea droppings) where your pet sleeps. These black specks contain blood, and turn red when wet.
- Use a light trap to monitor your home for fleas. Light traps attract fleas and trap them on sticky paper. Traps work better if people and pets are not around — fleas prefer warm bodies to traps.

PREVENTING FLEAS

In your home

The vast majority of fleas (in several life stages) live throughout your home rather than on your pet. Therefore indoor flea prevention is a key part of flea control.

- **Frequently vacuum carpets, floors, couches, and chairs** to pick up adult fleas, larvae, and eggs. Empty vacuum or dispose of bags in the trash, outdoors.
- **Frequently wash pet bedding in hot soapy water.**
- **Thoroughly clean cracks and crevices in floors or baseboards, or permanently seal with caulk.**

Fleas make pets and people uncomfortable, and can transmit tapeworms to pets and sometimes to children.

Fleas in your home spend the vast majority of their lifetime — up to 18 months — as eggs, larvae or pupae, not as biting fleas on your pet. Adult fleas can live on your pet for up to 40 days and females lay 20-50 eggs every day, which means flea problems can get out of control quickly, especially in warmer weather when fleas are more active. This is why getting rid of all life stages of fleas by vacuuming and washing pet bedding — not just getting rid of adult fleas — is needed to prevent or stop a flea infestation.

- **Blow or hand dust diatomaceous earth (DE) into cracks and crevices.** Use DE labeled for use on pests, or use "food-grade" DE; avoid swimming pool DE. Wear a dust mask and goggles to keep DE out of your lungs and eyes.
- **Avoid using indoor foggers** as the pesticides transfer onto you, your clothing, and indoor surfaces. Upon washing, these pesticides go down the sewer drain and impact water quality.



Choose eco-friendly products for your home and garden. Look for this symbol before you buy.

On your pet

- Wash your pet with a pesticide-free pet shampoo and warm water. Avoid shampoos containing the pesticide bifenthrin. When bifenthrin ends up in our waters, it harms crustaceans, aquatic insects, and fish.
- Use a flea comb (available at pet stores) to remove adult fleas on your cat or dog. Drown fleas caught in the comb in a cup of warm soapy water and flush or pour down the drain. Make sure to comb well around your pet's neck and base of the tail.
- Ask your veterinarian if chewable (oral) flea medications are an option for your pet. These products are safer for the environment than indoor foggers and topical ("spot-on") pet treatments, sprays and collars.
- If you use spot-on flea treatments, avoid products that contain fipronil, bifenthrin, imidacloprid, indoxacarb, deltamethrin, or permethrin — chemicals that cause water quality programs in creeks, rivers, or bays, and the ocean.

Outdoors

- Don't treat for fleas outdoors unless you see large numbers of fleas there. Spray insecticidal soap only in those areas where you find fleas.
- Apply beneficial nematodes (*H. bacteriophora* or *S. carpocapse*) to soil where you have found fleas. Soil temperature must be between 60°F and 90°F, and the soil should be moist. Water before and after application, but don't soak the area.

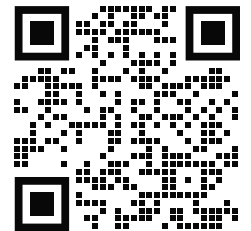
USING PESTICIDES INDOORS ISN'T HEALTHY FOR YOU, YOUR PETS, OR THE ENVIRONMENT

Pesticides used on your pet or throughout your home transfer onto you and indoor surfaces around your home. For example, exposure to fipronil — a common



ingredient in many spot-on topical treatments — may lead to adverse human health impacts to those applying the treatment and to children (California Department of Pesticide Regulation, 2023).

When washing pets, bedding, clothing, and your hands, these pesticides go down the sewer drain and impact water quality. Wastewater treatment plants cannot fully remove complex chemicals like pesticides. Wastewater agencies are concerned that pesticides in spot-on flea treatments can wash off a pet — even weeks after being applied — and end up in California waterways.



Scan the QR Code to learn more about controlling fleas.



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Our Water Our World (OWOW) is an award-winning partnership between municipal agencies and garden centers and hardware stores that sell pest control products. Initiated in 1998, the program focuses on less-toxic, eco-friendly products and techniques as many common pesticides are harmful to sensitive species and ecosystems when they reach California surface waters.

Our Water Our World fact sheets and store displays educate residents about less-toxic pest management. Look for the **Eco-friendly** tag next to less-toxic products in participating stores and nurseries.



Our Water Our World is a program of the California Stormwater Quality Association® (CASQA), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that advances sustainable stormwater management protective of California water resources. CASQA is the registered service mark of the California Stormwater Quality Association®.

Pest control strategies and methods described in this publication are consistent with integrated pest management (IPM) concepts, and are based on scientific studies and tests in actual home and garden settings. Use suggested products according to label directions and dispose of unwanted or leftover pesticides at a household hazardous waste collection facility or event. For more information on pesticide disposal, visit www.earth911.com.

For more information, contact:

www.ourwaterourworld.org

University of California IPM

www.ipm.ucanr.edu

To find out how you can protect water quality with eco-friendly pest control, go to ourwaterourworld.org/pesticides-and-water-quality