

# Cat Flea Products – Everything You Need To Know

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 [www.cat-world.com.au/cat-flea-products.html](http://www.cat-world.com.au/cat-flea-products.html)

Today we are swamped with a vast array of different types of flea products to use on our cats. It can be somewhat confusing for the cat owner to choose which product should be used on their cat. We will attempt to look at the different products available, what they do and their efficiency. It should be noted that no flea control method will work if you don't treat your house and garden at the same time. Only 5% of fleas actually live on your cat, the rest of the flea population is in the environment. Both your cat and home (including cat bedding etc) should be treated on the same day.

## Flea collars:

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There are many different types of flea collar on the market. Some are insecticide only and work by killing adult fleas on the cat. Other flea collars contain IGR's to kill the eggs and larvae.

Flea collars often only kill fleas on the cat's head and neck, but fleas further down the body survive.

Some cats can develop a rash from the chemicals in the flea collar. This is known as "flea collar dermatitis or flea collar rash".

One handy use for flea collars is to put a flea collar into your vacuum cleaner bag so that any fleas that are vacuumed up from the environment will be killed. a

## Flea powders, shampoos, and dips:

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Flea shampoos are an effective way to kill fleas on your cat. The downside is that many cats can be difficult to bathe. Also, flea shampoos and dips will only kill the fleas on your cat at the time, and won't help prevent re-infestation. Therefore re-infestation will occur if your cat is exposed to fleas remaining in the environment or on other pets.

Shampoos and dips also need to be repeated often.

## Flea combs:

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Flea combs aren't overly effective, only removing 10 – 50% of fleas on your cat. If you wish

to use this method place a small bowl of water with some detergent in it close by and drop the fleas into the bowl. This will drown the fleas. Placing a small amount of petroleum jelly onto the teeth of the comb will help the fleas stick to it. These can be useful when removing fleas on newborn kittens as flea products are not safe to use on very young kittens.

## Oral suspensions:

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Program® and Sentinel® is given to cats via an oral suspension once a month. The product is added to the cat's food and is absorbed into the bloodstream. When a flea bites a cat treated with Program it ingests the active ingredient (lufenuron), which is passed to her eggs and prevents them from hatching. As this product only prevents eggs from hatching, an appropriate adulticide will also be needed to kill adult fleas. Seek advice from your veterinarian before using more than one product on your cat. It is also extremely important to speak to your veterinarian if you are considering treating a pregnant or nursing cat. They will be able to recommend the safest treatment for your cat.



## Spot on treatments:

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Topical adulticide. There are several effective products on the market which are administered via

liquid form to the cat's shoulders. These are available through your veterinarian or online pet product store. These products are very effective for killing adult fleas on your cat. The active ingredient varies from product to product. Application is generally once a month.



When applying a flea product to a cat it is important to follow the instructions on the packet. Cats are extremely sensitive to chemicals and if you are using one than one product your cat may be exposed to too many toxins, resulting in sickness or death.

Some of the most effective and popular topical flea control products used on cats (and dogs) include Advantage, Revolution, and Frontline.

Revolution also kills worms (except tapeworm), so makes life a bit easier for pet owners, Advantage cat flea control also kills flea larvae in the pet's environment too.

## Tablets:

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Capstar can be given to kill current adult flea infestations on your cat. One tablet can kill fleas for 24 hours and repeat treatment can be given daily if necessary. Comfortis can also protect your cat from ticks and treat flea allergy dermatitis.

Capstar can be given to kittens from 4 weeks of age and Comfortis can be given to kittens from 14 weeks old.

## Injection:

Program now comes in an injectable form. This is administered subcutaneously (under the skin) once every six months.

<b>Tablets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Comfortis (fleas, ticks, and flea allergy dermatitis), administered once a month.</li><li>• Capstar (fleas). Kills adult fleas on your cat for 24 hours. Can be used in conjunction with topical flea products (see below).</li></ul>
<b>Topical solutions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Revolution (fleas, ear mites, intestinal worms- <i>except tapeworm</i>, heartworm)</li><li>• Advantage (fleas)</li><li>• Program (fleas)</li><li>• Frontline Plus (fleas, ticks, <i>ear mites-off label</i> and flea allergy dermatitis)</li><li>• Activyl (fleas, ticks, and ear mites)</li><li>• Advocate (fleas, mange, ear mites, heartworm, intestinal worms)</li></ul>
<b>Sprays</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Frontline (fleas and ticks)</li><li>• Advantage (fleas)</li></ul>
<b>Injection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program (fleas)</li></ul>

## When can kittens be treated for fleas?

Flea infestations in kittens can quickly become life-threatening due to their tiny size. Below is a chart of the above medications and the safe age they can be given to kittens. You can also remove fleas with a flea comb.

<b>Product</b>	<b>Minimum age</b>
Revolution	6 weeks
Frontline Plus	8 weeks
Frontline spray	2 days
Advocate	9 weeks and over 1kg (2.2 lbs)
Advantage	8 weeks
Program	6 weeks
Activyl	8 weeks
Comfortis	14 weeks
Capstar	4 weeks

## Is it safe to use cat flea collar with a spot on flea treatment?

Do not use more than one flea product on your cat as both products combined may result in a toxic level of exposure to your cat, which is life-threatening. ALWAYS consult with your veterinarian before using more than one flea control method on your cat.

## My cat has been treated but still has fleas:

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More and more people are raising concerns about the effectiveness of flea products, I personally have experienced this with my own cats. It is believed that fleas may be developing a resistance many popular brands of product, reducing their effectiveness. If you are experiencing this problem with your own cat, speak to your veterinarian as there are a number of newer products on the market which may help. I have a cat who suffers terribly from flea allergy dermatitis and as of today have switched him to Comfortis. I will provide an update in a few weeks on how he is.

A second possible cause is your cat is becoming quickly re-infested either because the home hasn't been adequately decontaminated (remember it is only adult fleas which live on your cat, the rest of the flea life cycle is spent in the environment such as bedding, in crevices, carpets etc). Vacuum your home, paying attention to under furniture and along skirting boards, wash all cat bedding and dry in the sun or a tumble dryer. You can also use Frontline spray on your cat's bedding. A flea bomb or a pest controller should also be used to kill fleas in the environment.

Finally, remember to treat all cats and dogs for fleas at the same time.

Remember to treat your cats regularly:

You can set up a reminder for your cat's anti-parasitic treatment (fleas, worms etc) using either a free downloadable app, or an email service, which can be found [on Merck](#) or on [Frontline site](#).

## Warning:

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- Never use a [dog flea product](#) on your cat.
- Always follow the manufacturers' instructions, some products may need to be administered more frequently if you are treating more than one parasite (usually ticks).
- For more information on flea control products, see your veterinarian.
- Always check a product is suitable to use on pregnant or lactating females and young kittens.

