

# My pet is too tiny for flea and tick products.

# NOW WHAT?



When your puppy or kitten can't safely use preventive medications, you can still keep your new companion free of bothersome bugs.

When you want to protect your new puppy or kitten from parasites but they're still too small for preventive medications, you might wonder if fleas, ticks and other creepy crawlies are inevitable for your tiny friend. No way! Here are a few handy tips to keep the bugs at bay.

## 1. Manually check your pet for fleas.

When you don't have a preventive product to take care of external parasites such as fleas and ticks, you've got to be diligent. Check your pet daily for any new "friends" she might have picked up along the way. Most pet stores and veterinary offices offer flea combs—fine-toothed combs that can pick up and remove fleas from your pet's fur. The most common areas for fleas to hide out are the base of the tail and head, but comb over their entire body. If you do find fleas, dip the comb in alcohol, rinse it in the sink and dry it before continuing to work through the fur.

## 2. Don't forget about ticks.

Fleas are the most common pest pet owners deal with, but ticks can also be an issue, especially if you live in a

highly wooded area. Ticks can also be found with a flea comb but are more difficult to remove if they're already embedded in your pet's skin. Tick removers are available in stores, but you can also use a pair of household tweezers. Get as close to your pet's skin as you can so you remove the entire tick. Sometimes the head parts of the tick will remain embedded in your pet's skin and may cause irritation. If this doesn't resolve on its own, your veterinarian can help you remove the remaining tick parts.

## 3. Protect your home.

If you have a flea infestation in your home, it will be even harder to protect your pet from parasites without preventive products. Flea infestations can happen quickly and are often difficult to detect at first. If you're consistently seeing large numbers of fleas on your pet, this may be an indication your home is infested. You may also see flea bites on yourself, the most common area being the lower leg and ankle. Most pet stores and veterinarians carry fogger sprays and other products you can use to treat a flea infestation in your home. If these aren't available or you don't feel comfortable using them on your

own, you can have your home professionally treated.

## 4. Beware of the quick fix.

There are many over-the-counter products that claim to rid your pet of parasites, such as flea dips and baths. Beware! Veterinarians and their teams discourage the use of these products as they can be toxic to young, small animals.

After manually removing fleas and ticks, you can use a mild, diluted dish soap to wash the pet's skin as needed. Be sure to keep the pet warm afterward—he might be too small to regulate his own temperature.

## 5. Switch to preventive medications ASAP.

Once your pet reaches 8 weeks of age and 2 pounds or more, you can switch to an easier and more reliable method of prevention. There are multiple types of preventive products: topical, oral and collar. Each type has its own requirements for age and administration schedules, so ask your veterinarian how often to use them. Year-round use is the most effective way to protect your pet, so be sure to keep using them even in cold months.