

Fleas, Ticks and Your Grey

By: Maryann Tolliver, President-GPA/Tampa Bay

I've had many calls about Fleas and Ticks. This is the season which is usually the worse from May through August and try as you may it is going to be very difficult to be 100% flea or tick free. Here is a little review of the things to do to either prevent or eliminate those little buggers:

Advantage, used 1x a month (or longer if you can) ONLY for fleas. Once the fleas are gone using advantage every 2-3 mos. is usually sufficient.

Frontline, used 1X a month IF you have a TICK problem, and it lasts approx 3 mos for fleas. This is probably the most cost effective way to as long as you don't have a TICK infestation. The vets also carry Frontline spray, when your grey comes in from outside spray their feet lightly, under their chest. Again, once under control it can generally be spread out to 3-5 mos. or when needed.

Capstar: Used as an emergency treatment to kill the fleas on the pet within 5-10 mins. However, once they go back into the house, or wherever the fleas are the fleas will get back onto the pet. This product is used mostly prior to walking into a boarding facility or a vet's office. It is not a preventative.

Ticks tend to hang out in low lying brush, leaves up to one foot off the ground, if your grass is high, or you walk thru high grass your grey will be at risk of picking up a tick. Check them every time they come in from outside or from a walk. If you find one remove careful and put the live tick in alcohol. If the head is embedded use tweezers and make sure you remove the whole tick not just the body. IF a tick is engorged with blood, generally there will be 2-4 smaller ticks sitting under the engorged tick, remove all and put into alcohol. BTW, YOU can bring ticks & fleas home on your clothing, in your car, etc. and transfer to your pet also. If your neighbors have cats that roam the neighborhood or they have dogs that have a problem they are going to cross over into your yard.

Tick collars: Not our first choice for the greyhounds, but the ticks can cause problems if long term, the best one and the safest for the greyhounds are the PREVENTIC, they last about 6 mos.

Unfortunately, the FLEAS or TICKS MUST bite your pet to die, and it does take some time for these products to work.

Use a good quality flea & tick shampoo that you buy at your vet office.

Bomb your house. They do work and must be done every 3-4 weeks to break the cycle. Remove all pets for the prescribed time, cover the food, food bowls, and empty the drinking water.

Spray your yard, and your wood fence if you have ticks, ticks tend to like wood. Rain will bring them out. The do it yourself pest stores are extremely helpful and will guide you to the correct product for your problem.

Adams flea & tick spray, it works for the bedding, carpets, etc. I would not spray my pet directly; they make 2 products, one for home and one for pets. Do not spray your pet with Adams, buy Frontline.

When vacuuming, immediately dispose of the bag or wash the filter, fleas & ticks will live in your vacuum.

Keep the pets bedding clean, wash with 20 mule team borax at least weekly.

STAY AWAY FROM DOGGIE PARKS, BEACHES, ETC. Other pet owners do not always take care of their pets the way you do, many of the problems are picked up walking your pet and at doggie parks. Keep your pet in your own back yard!

There are some new flea products your vet may recommend, I'd say no for the greyhounds, there have been some side effects on those products, advantage & frontline are proven to be effective and safe for the greys.

Natural products:

Apple cider vinegar. 1 capful daily in the drinking water. Dilute some in a spray bottle and spray your pet.

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20 Mule Team Borax, spread along baseboards, carpets, dog bedding, etc. It works and isn't harmful

Garlic, a small amount sprinkled on the food daily helps.

DO NOT buy over the counter products like bio-spot, etc for the greys; it may be ok for other breeds but not good for our greyhounds.

NEVER, EVER allow a groomer to Flea Dip your greyhound. It can kill them.

Fleas can travel 1 mile, they can live for 90 days w/o a food (blood) source. This is the reason to bomb or break the cycle every 3-4 weeks. If you want some good fun reading about fleas check out this site www.stopthefleas.com
Fleas have been around for a very long time, just like roaches, we just need to learn how to keep them under control.

Ticks can only crawl, the reason they are on low lying brush, leaves, etc. In the North most fleas & ticks are dormant during the colder months giving pet owners a break, Florida doesn't get cold enough and these pests are active all year round.