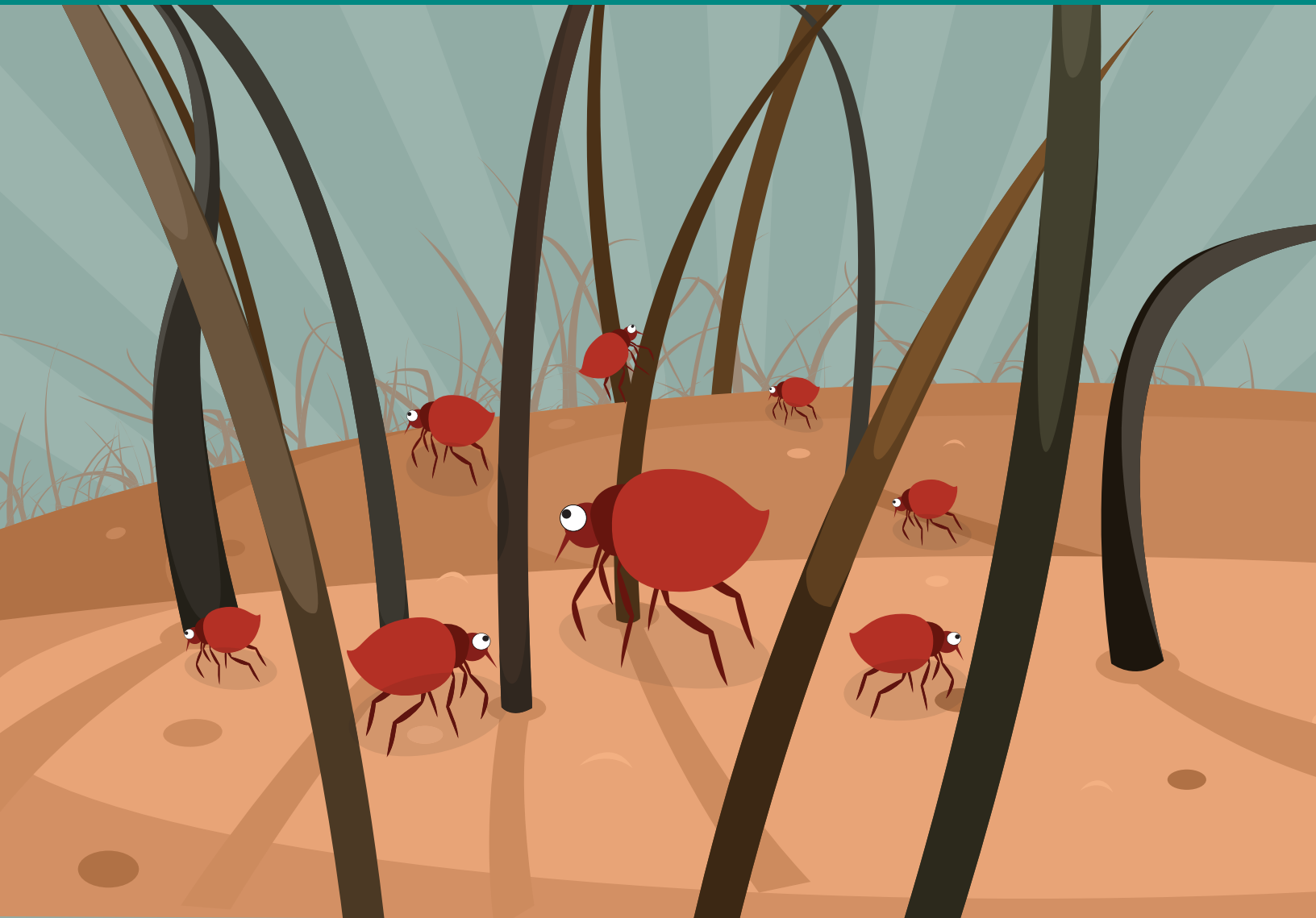


HELP! MY DOG HAS FLEAS!

A STEP BY STEP CHECKLIST TO GET FLEAS OFF
YOUR DOG AND OUT OF YOUR HOME



**HEY, THIS WHAT FLEAS LOOK
LIKE ON YOUR DOG**

THINK YOUR DOG HAS FLEAS?

Skip Google, we've got everything you need to do right here. Follow the step-by-step checklist below to de-flea your pets, your home, and yourself in no time! And then, look for our tips on preventing another flea infestation ever again!



☐ STEP 1: HOW TO TELL IF YOUR DOG HAS FLEAS

If your dog has fleas, he's probably showing some of these signs:

- ☐ Unusual scratching
- ☐ Shaking his head
- ☐ Biting at himself
- ☐ Chewing
- ☐ Licking
- ☐ Restlessness



You might be getting bitten too! Flea bites leave little red itchy bumps on your skin – or you may even spot a flea on yourself.

If your dog's had fleas for a long time, he may show some more severe symptoms, like:

- ☐ Pale gums: Fleas suck blood and can cause anemia
- ☐ Hair loss from constant licking and scratching
- ☐ Tapeworms*: Rice-like bodies in your dog's stool can be tapeworm segments. Fleas can carry tapeworm larvae. If your dog's swallowed fleas while grooming himself, that could cause tapeworms to take up residence in his small intestine, so tapeworms may be a sign he's got fleas.

**To get rid of tapeworms, try sprinkling some dried, unsweetened coconut on his food. Coconut is a vermifuge, meaning it can help eliminate tapeworms. Give 1 tsp daily to small dogs, 2 tsp to medium dogs and 1 Tbsp to large breeds.*

☐ **STEP 2: CONFIRM YOUR DOG ACTUALLY DOES HAVE FLEAS**

How do you know it's actually fleas? Do this to find out.

Inspect Your Dog Thoroughly

Use a flea comb and part your dog's hair or fur so you can see the skin. Most pet stores carry them.

Look around the ears (including the base of the ears), the armpits, groin and rump near the base of your dog's tail. Fleas love to hang out in those areas.



If you see any fast moving oval shaped bugs, they're probably fleas.

Grab one and crush it between your fingers. Fleas aren't easy to squish, so if you can flatten it easily, it may not be a flea.

Look for red bumps around your dog's groin area or in the armpits or other warm, moist places. Fleas can cause skin irritation and your dog may have little red bumps where he's been bitten.



The Flea Dirt Test

Flea dirt is a polite word for flea feces. They're black or reddish brown specks about the size of grains of sand or dandruff flakes. You can usually spot flea dirt on your dog and may even see it around your home.

When you see these specks, do the flea dirt test to confirm that what you're seeing is flea dirt and not just plain old dirt!

- ☐ Grab a paper towel and wet it
- ☐ Hold it near your dog, then brush or comb some of the specks off onto your wet paper towel
- ☐ If the towel becomes smeared with brownish-red marks, that means the dirt is flea poop (containing your dog's blood)

Flea dirt = flea infestation. Now what?

□ STEP 3: CHECK YOUR OTHER PETS

Fleas don't have wings but they're amazing jumpers. If they're on your dog they're probably on your other pets too.

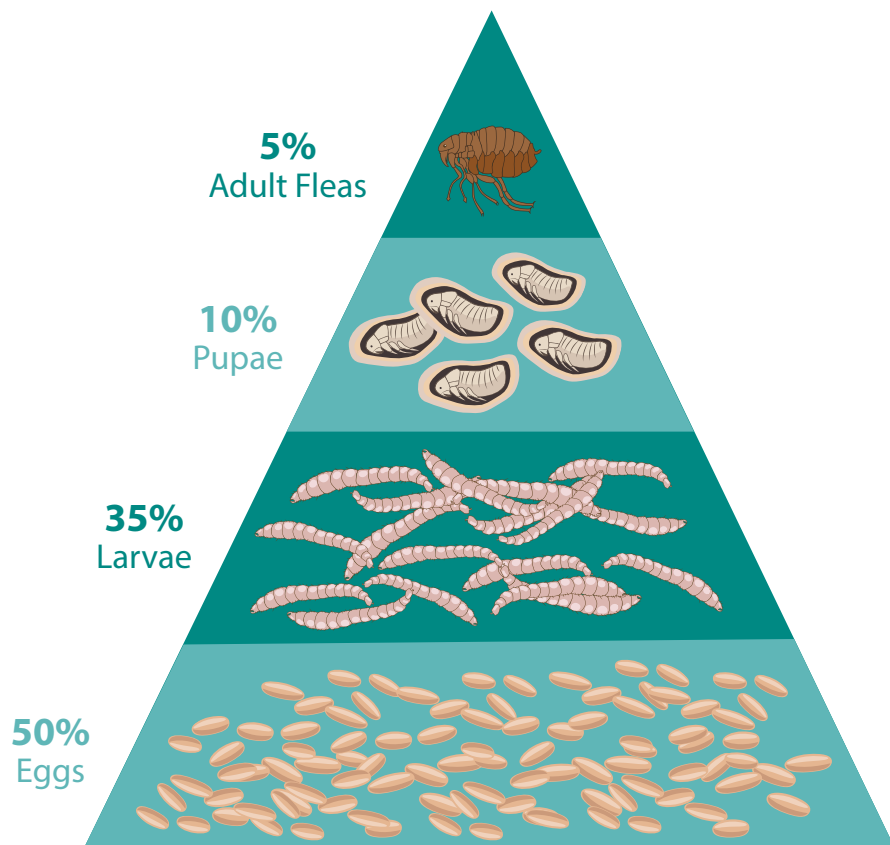
Follow **Step Two** with your other pets to see if they're also infested. Dogs, cats, guinea pigs, hamsters... most of these animals can also get fleas.

Just because one pet has fleas, it doesn't mean all of them do. Pets with healthier immune systems are less likely to host parasites like fleas, so not every pet in your home is susceptible to flea infestations. Check out the [Flea Prevention](#) section later in this Checklist to learn how a strong immune system can help prevent fleas.

□ STEP 4: UNDERSTAND THE FLEA LIFE CYCLE

Once you know who in your household has fleas and who doesn't, you can tackle getting rid of them.

Before starting the process, you need to understand the flea life cycle. Here's some information about it to help you understand that getting rid of fleas can be a repetitive process.



Adult fleas only live for about one to three months. But the entire flea life cycle can last several months.

There are four stages to the flea's life cycle.

The Egg Stage

When adult female fleas land on your dog, they start laying eggs right away. One female can lay about 40 eggs a day. Flea eggs look like white grains of sand and they're often in bunches of around 20 eggs.



Flea eggs will fall off your dog as he moves around, spreading fleas around your home. This means the eggs can end up anywhere in your home your dog goes – including your bed if that's where he sleeps. They can be quite hard to spot in your carpets. They may be in your car too.

Flea eggs account for about half the flea population (including all life stages) in your home.

How fast flea eggs develop depend on the conditions. In warm humid conditions, they can hatch in just a couple of days. If it's cool and dry, they could take about two weeks to hatch and become larvae.

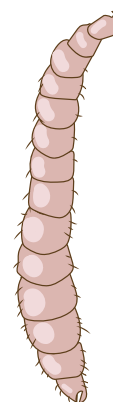
The Larvae Stage

Flea larvae are blind and avoid the light. They'll hang out in dark places, eating flea dirt left by adult fleas. They can live in any dark spaces of your home – like the cracks between floorboards, in dog beds and other furniture. They'll also feed on other organic debris in the environment – like old skin and hair, dead insects and food particles.

Flea larvae are small maggot-like bodies, white and translucent, legless and up to a quarter inch (4 to 5 mm) long. Their color will turn darker as they eat flea dirt.

Temperatures over 95 degrees or humidity below 45 to 50 percent can kill larvae, as they can't survive dehydration.

Larvae make up about 35% of the total flea population in your home. About one to three weeks after hatching, larvae will spin cocoons and become pupae.



The Pupae Stage

The pupae stage is the last stage before the adult flea emerges. Flea pupae live inside their cocoon to protect themselves while they're developing.

The pupae stage can last anywhere from about a week to several months.

With the right moist, warm conditions, the adult fleas will quickly emerge when they sense a potential host (like your dog moving around), so they have somewhere to feed. But if conditions are cool and dry, they can stay in their cocoon for as long as a year.

The cocoons are sticky and can hide from the vacuum cleaner deep down in your carpeting, so they're hard to remove. The cocoons also protect the fleas from anything you might use to try to kill them.



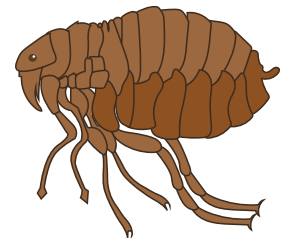
The Adult Stage

Once the adult fleas emerge, they need to feed right away. They'll take up residence on your dog and start feeding. Within a few days they'll breed and start laying eggs on your dog again.

And so the cycle starts over. The adult fleas can live on your dog anywhere from two weeks to several months.

Now that you understand the flea's life cycle, you can see how it's important to keep removing the fleas in their various stages – from your dog and other pets, from bedding, furniture, carpets and anywhere else they can hide around your home and your yard.

Break the life cycle by catching fleas in their early stages before the adult fleas emerge. This will help keep them off your dog and eliminate them from your home!



☐ STEP 5: DE-FLEA YOUR DOG (AND OTHER PETS)

Fleas don't spend all their time on your dog – they hop on when they need a meal. That makes de-fleaing your dog an ongoing process.

First, A Good Soapy Bath

A thorough soapy bath will kill any fleas that are on your dog at the time.

Before you put your dog in the bathtub, put a thick sudsy ring of soap around his neck, just behind his ears.* Once you put your dog in the tub, the fleas will run up your dog to get away from the water. The soap ring will stop them dead (literally) and prevent them from hiding on your dog's head.

***CAUTION:** Be careful to keep the soap and water from getting in your dog's ears!

Use a natural shampoo (Castile soap is a good choice) to bathe your dog. Adding a couple of drops of lavender and palo santo essential oils can help kill the fleas more effectively.

Natural dish soap with minimal water also works. The grease-cutting properties of the soap literally trap and suffocate the fleas.

After the soapy wash, rinse your dog with a mixture of one part apple cider vinegar to ten parts water. This creates a more acidic environment on your dog's skin, which will help discourage fleas from returning.



Once your dog dries off from his bath, you can also spray him with a natural flea repellent. Ready made cedar oil based sprays like Cedarcide or Wondercide work well. They're safe and most dogs don't seem to mind them.

Or make your own natural homemade flea repellent mixture from the recipes below.

Everyday Gentle Flea Repellent Mixture

This mixture is very gentle so you can spray it on your dog every day.

Ingredients

- ☐ 1 organic lemon
- ☐ 2 sprigs of fresh rosemary
- ☐ 1 sprig of garden sage (*Salvia officinalis*)
- ☐ 1 quart of filtered water
- ☐ Optional: a sprig of lavender

Instructions

1. Slice the lemon into thin rounds
2. Place the lemon, rosemary and sage in a large stainless steel or glass bowl
3. Add a quart of almost boiling water
4. Cover and let steep overnight
5. In the morning strain the liquid into a spray bottle
6. Refrigerate (lasts 1 to 2 weeks)

Essential Oil Flea Repellent Mixture

This is a stronger repellent. Spray your dog once he's dried off from his bath.

Start with a carrier oil such as grape seed oil or fractionated coconut oil. To each 1 ml of carrier oil, add one drop of **one** of these flea-repelling essential oils.

- ☐ Lavender
- ☐ Lemon
- ☐ Cedar
- ☐ Palo santo
- ☐ Eucalyptus radiata
- ☐ Clary sage
- ☐ Peppermint

CAUTION: Always dilute essential oils and never, ever use them undiluted on your dog. It's important to use a carrier oil, not water, to dilute your essential oils because they are not water solvent.

Frequent Flea Combing

For the next few days, keep combing your dog using a flea comb dipped in soapy water. Do this several times a day until the fleas are gone.



☐ STEP 6: REPEAT STEP FIVE WEEKLY

Give your dog a soapy bath once a week and keep using the soapy flea comb until you're sure the fleas are gone.



☐ STEP 7: DE-FLEA YOUR HOME

You're going to be doing a lot of vacuuming and laundry for a while! You'll also need to repeat this process several times to break the flea life cycle and completely get rid of them.

Bedding – His And Yours

Wash all your dog's bedding. If the fabric will stand it, dry it in a hot dryer.

If your dog shares your bed, wash all of your own bedding too (you'll be glad you did, or you'll get bitten as well). Again, dry your bedding in a hot dryer if the fabrics can take it.



Carpets And Rugs

Treating your carpets and rugs thoroughly is crucial in breaking the flea life cycle. Steam clean them. This is the best way to get rid of fleas hiding in/on your rugs and carpets.

This will kill the adult fleas as well as eggs, larvae and even the hard-to-reach cocooned pupae. Having your own steam cleaner is a good investment (even for non flea situations when you have dogs!) or you can rent steam cleaners from places like Home Depot or Bissell stores.

Calling in professional steam cleaning crews is a labor saving option for you, but it's expensive, especially since repeat cleanings may be needed. If you use a professional service, find one that'll use natural cleaning fluids and avoid toxic carpet shampoos.

Diatomaceous Earth (DE)

Diatomaceous earth is silicon dioxide, a non-toxic white powder that's messy to use but works very well as a follow up to washing the bedding and steam cleaning carpets and rugs



CAUTION: Always use food grade DE (available at health food stores or many places online). Don't ever use pool grade DE! It's heat-treated, a process that turns the silicon dioxide into crystalline silica, which is toxic to humans and animals. Pool grade DE should only ever be used for filtration.

To treat your home with DE:

- ☐ Sprinkle it on bedding, sofas, chairs and other upholstered surfaces, and on carpets and rugs
- ☐ Work it in with a brush (or broom for carpets and rugs)
- ☐ Leave it down for a few hours – or preferably overnight
- ☐ Vacuum thoroughly

Dispose of the vacuum contents by putting them in a plastic bag, sealing it and placing in outdoor trash so the fleas don't escape back into your home!

Bare Floors

It's definitely easier to get fleas (at all life stages) off your bare floors by vacuuming thoroughly and then mopping everywhere.

If you have wood floors remember fleas and especially larvae (which like the dark) may hide in the cracks between the floor boards. You can sprinkle DE into the cracks, leave it down for a few hours and then vacuum it up.

It's also a good idea to use DE around the baseboards in the same way, in case the fleas have sneaked under them.

A Clever Flea Trap

Another very old, safe method of removing fleas involves a container of soapy water under a light bulb.

CAUTION: This solution is only for people who are handy with electricals, as you'll need to figure out how to hang a light bulb one foot above a low container.

- ☐ Use a container about a foot wide and two to three inches deep
- ☐ Add at least an inch of soapy water to it
- ☐ The fleas are attracted to the light, so they'll jump at it and fall in the soapy water
- ☐ Move the light bulb and container trap around about five feet a day – or have several traps in the areas where your dog hangs out and sleeps
- ☐ You can use these traps indoors as well as outdoors in damp or shaded areas where fleas proliferate – under porches, decks, carports, at the edges of woods and especially in places where your dog lies down outdoors

☐ **STEP 8: DE-FLEA YOUR YARD**

Eliminating fleas that are hanging out in your yard, especially if your dog spends a lot of time outdoors, is another vital step in breaking the flea life cycle.

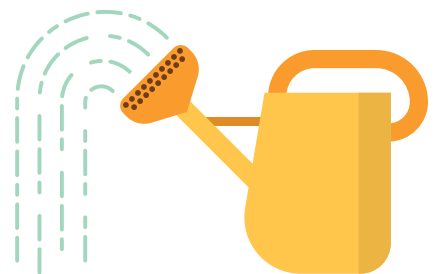
First, keep your grass short.

Although it's really better for your lawn to leave your grass a little longer, when you're dealing with a flea infestation it pays to cut the grass short for a while.

Next, spray your yard

Use a yard hose sprayer to treat your yard, especially areas where your dog hangs out. You'll need to repeat this process too, until you're sure all the fleas are gone.

Safe ready-made products include Cedarcide and Wondercide which both make sprays to treat your yard. Both companies also sell cedar mulch and granules that you can put down to help keep pests away.



For a home made solution, add this mixture to your yard hose sprayer:

- ☐ 2 oz dish soap
- ☐ 10 drops neem oil
- ☐ 20 drops cedarwood oil

Don't use this mixture on succulent plants as it can kill them. Spraying your yard with this mixture during flea season can help keep the pests off your dog and out of your home.

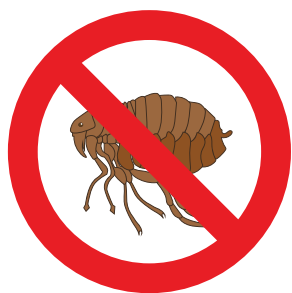
Use Nematodes

Nematodes are tiny worms that live in the soil. They eat flea larvae as well as other garden pests like ants, termites and grubs. You can use nematodes to catch the fleas in their larval stage... just another way to help break the flea life cycle.

Buy them at many garden centers, or online suppliers like [Arbico Organics](#).

Follow the label instructions and spray your yard with the nematodes, which should reduce flea larvae by about 90 percent within 24 hours.

Whether you have a flea infestation or not, nematodes are a great preventive measure to take. Even though nematodes are live creatures, they will die off periodically when they don't get enough to eat. Spray your yard in spring and then repeat in summer and fall to really help keep fleas at bay.



☐ STEP 9: PREVENT FLEAS IN FUTURE!

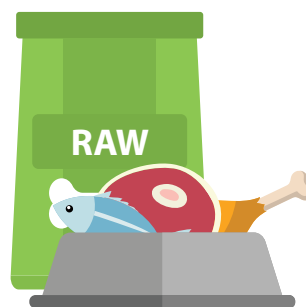
It's much easier to prevent fleas in the first place than it is to get rid of them once you have an infestation.

Keeping your dog healthy will help keep the fleas away. Fleas and other parasites are much less likely to infest a healthy animal.

Feed A Natural Diet

Food is medicine and a great diet is the best place to start building your dog's health. Give your dog the best diet you can afford, preferably a whole food raw meat based diet.

Feed your dog whole foods like raw muscle meat and bones, organ meats, raw eggs, oily fish like sardines and mackerel, as well as a colorful range of pureed (or lightly steamed) vegetables.



Minimize Vaccinations And Other Drugs

Over-vaccinating your dog can severely impair his immune system, which will make him more attractive to fleas and other parasites.

Find a holistically minded vet (there's a directory at [the AHVMA - American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association](#)) who'll support you in using minimal vaccinations for your dog. Minimal vaccination means rabies no more than every three years to comply with rabies laws.



If your dog's already had other core vaccines like parvo and distemper, ask your vet for a titer – a blood test that'll measure his antibodies to these diseases. He's likely protected for life by the vaccinations he's already had and a positive titer will confirm this.



Avoid using antibiotics and other pharmaceutical drugs as well. This includes toxic flea, tick and heartworm medications!

Again, consult a holistic vet to find natural alternatives to all conventional drugs. You'll keep your dog healthier overall and he'll be more resistant to parasites like fleas.

Avoid Chemicals In Your Dog's Environment

Use non-toxic cleaning supplies to clean surfaces in your home. Your dog spends a lot of time on the floor, so it's especially important to avoid using chemicals to clean your floors. Good old white vinegar and baking soda can tackle most cleaning jobs in the house!

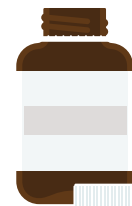


Even though you want a perfect green lawn, avoid using chemical pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers in your yard. There are many safer, organic options available at garden centers, so seek out products that won't harm your dog.

Boost Your Dog's Immune System

Adding some immune-boosting supplements to your dog's diet can also help keep parasites away. Some easy ways to do this are:

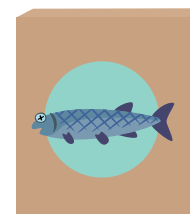
- ❑ **Probiotics:** Give a good quality probiotic supplement daily, or feed him probiotic-rich foods like kefir ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup per 25 lbs of body weight per day) and fermented vegetables (1 tsp per 15 lbs per day).



- ❑ **Garlic:** Add garlic to his diet. Garlic is safe when used in moderation, and will not only boost his immune system but can also help repel fleas and other pests. Give $\frac{1}{4}$ clove of garlic per 10 lbs of your dog's body weight each day. Buy fresh organic garlic and chop it about 15 minutes before adding to food. This releases allicin, the main medicinal property in garlic.



- ❑ **Omega-3 fatty acids:** Omega-3s can support your dog's immune system, but be careful about the source. Fish oils are a source of Omega-3s but only if they're from a pure source uncontaminated by heavy metals, and they're not rancid. Don't rely on fish oils included in commercial foods because they're usually rancid by the time you open the bag, and that can cause more harm than good. Instead of giving fish oil, it's better to feed your dog oily fish like sardines or mackerel about once a week.



Phytoplankton is an excellent source of Omega-3s (as well as other vital nutrients) as it's a whole food, not a supplement, and that makes it highly bioavailable and well absorbed by your dog. Give $\frac{1}{6}$ tsp per day mixed into food.

Other sources of Omega-3s include hemp, chia seed or flaxseed oils.

- ❑ **Coconut oil:** Rotating coconut oil into your dog's diet is a good idea as it contains medium chain fatty acids that support the immune system. Give 1 tsp per day per 10 lbs of body weight.



Use Step Nine to focus on preventing fleas and avoid having to go through Steps One Through Eight ever again!