

Controlling Fleas Naturally

Why we care

Fleas are a reality when you own a dog or cat, but the most common ways of controlling them—collars (likely the most toxic), topical treatments, sprays, and dusts—may put pets and humans at risk. Cats lick toxic powders from their fur, and children can pick up chemicals on their hands after touching pets. Toxic flea bombs may last months on carpets and furniture, yet are generally ineffective. Many of the pesticides allowed for use on pets are linked to serious health issues in people. Also, the fix is often temporary. If pets are allowed outdoors, the fleas will come back.

Simple, positive steps

- Be aware that the following nontoxic remedies have been shown by studies to *not* be effective: Vitamin B1, brewer's yeast, herbal collars, and ultrasonic devices.
- Establish one sleeping area for your pet that can be cleaned easily and regularly. Wash bedding in hot water at least once a week.
- Vacuum the areas your pet has access to weekly (daily if you have an infestation).
- Use a flea comb, outdoors or in the bathtub, to remove fleas and monitor the population. Drop fleas into a container of soapy water, and then flush the water down the toilet.
- Shampoo your pet regularly.
- If after a year of trying the steps outlined above you still have a flea control problem, talk to your veterinarian about prescription treatments.
- As a last resort, keep animals either outside *or* inside. Don't let them go back and forth.
- For more information, see the NRDC [website](#).

Questions or feedback? Contact Jeanne Roy at jeanne@ecoschoolnetwork.org.