

# Using Pesticides on Your Pet<sup>1</sup>

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## Ticks and Fleas on Your Pet

Some products considered to be safe for pets have been relabeled to enhance safety. Prior to relabeling, some of the phenothrin products occasionally caused hair loss, salivation, and tremors in cats and kittens. Since pesticide labels change, it is important to keep current pesticide labels. Some of the wording on certain products will have specific-use statements regarding cat and kitten ages and weight limitations. Besides reading the label and checking for age and weight limitations, be sure to:

- Choose the correct product for your specific pet and for the specific pest problem. Certain products are approved for dogs but not cats.
- Do not use any pesticide product on debilitated, aged, medicated, sick, pregnant, or nursing pets, or pets known to be sensitive to pesticide products without first reading the label to see if there are warnings about use on these sensitive animals and consulting a veterinarian.
- Never separate or discard the package, which contains the label, from the product container, such as individual applicator tubes.
- Observe your pet after application for any sign of sensitivity.

- If signs of sensitivity occur, bathe your pet with mild soap, rinse with a large amount of water, and consult a veterinarian immediately.

## Pesticide Alternatives for Tick and Flea Control

Pesticides are effective, but you may find non-pesticidal approaches to be effective in some cases. Consider:

- Use of a flea comb;
- Vacuum frequently and dispose of the bags;
- Keep lawn areas mowed regularly where pets spend time;
- Wash pet bedding weekly;
- Wash pet with a pesticide-free pet shampoo; and
- Keep pets indoors.

## Products and Their Containers

The rule of thumb is to keep all products in their original containers. Also, keep in mind:

- It is very dangerous to put products in food and beverage containers.
- Containers without tight-fitting lids can easily spill, allowing your pet access to the product.

1. This document is PI-82, one of a series of the Agronomy Department, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date November 2005. Revised December 2008 and March 2014. Reviewed March 2017. Reviewed April 2020. Visit the EDIS website at <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

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The use of trade names in this publication is solely for the purpose of providing specific information. UF/IFAS does not guarantee or warranty the products named, and references to them in this publication does not signify our approval to the exclusion of other products of suitable composition. Use pesticides safely. Read and follow directions on the manufacturer's label.

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- If you throw away the original container, you throw away important information needed in case of an emergency.
- If the label tells you to mix a product in another container, use all of the mixture. If you can't use all the mixture, label the new container for use in the future.

Racke, K.D. and A.R. Leslie. 1993. *Pesticides in Urban Environments*. ACS Symposium Series 522, American Chemical Society, Washington D.C.

## Be Wary of Counterfeits

The EPA has determined that counterfeiters have placed as inserts within pet product retail cartons foreign-labeled application instructions printed to resemble the U.S.-registered labels.

The counterfeit products pose potential risks due to units of measure that are unfamiliar to U.S. consumers, lack of child-resistant packaging, lack of precautionary statements, and the potential for the pesticide to be other than what is indicated on the carton. For example, first-aid treatment directions may not be immediately available in case of an emergency. Further, a child may be harmed if he or she is able to open a package that is not child-resistant. Thus, EPA is recommending that consumers dispose of a product that has been discovered to be counterfeit.

## Where to Get Help

- Most labels have a phone number listed on them for emergency purposes. In many cases, their phones are manned 24 hours a day.
- Keep your local poison control center phone number near the phone.
- Keep your veterinarians phone number near the phone.
- In the event of an emergency and making a phone call, have the pesticide products label in-hand. The label provides those helping you with important information about the product.

## Summary

Pets are our companions and deserve our care. Pesticide products can help alleviate their discomfort caused by insects and insect-like organisms, but pet caretakers need to take precautions.

## Additional Information

Fishel, F.M. 2008. *Counterfeit Pesticides for Your Pet*. Gainesville: University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pi208>

Fishel, F.M. 2005. *Protecting Your Pet from Pesticides*. Gainesville: University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pi118>