

# Tick prevention and preventatives

There are hundreds of chemical products available that claim to prevent ticks from attaching to a dog or puppy or to kill them after they bite, but not all are effective, and none of them are entirely harmless. Some are safer than others depending on the ingredients used. The "spot-on" treatments, such as Frontline®, that are available from your veterinarian are among the best choices.

"All topical tick preventatives are currently under investigation for safety, but most of the complaints and problems concern over-the-counter products that use different ingredients from the products vets recommend," Dr. Morgan says.

Dr. Morgan emphasizes that Frontline® is just one product of many, and that it's a mistake to call all spot-on tick or flea preventatives Frontline®. Just as not all tissues are Kleenex® and not all household bleach is Clorox®, not all tick preventatives are Frontline®, and the active ingredients are different with varying degrees of safety.

While other chemical preventatives recommended by vets, such as K9 Advantix®, are often very effective, herbal products can also do a good job. Shani Kovacevic, owner of Ocean City Animal House pet supply store in Ocean City, New Jersey, says the main difference is that the herbal products must be reapplied if the dog gets wet. They also need to be reapplied more frequently.

"Herbal tick preventatives are very aromatic, so when you don't smell it anymore, that's when it's time to reapply," Shani says.

Shani's store carries pre-mixed essential oil preparations that are easy to apply, but she also recommends concentrations that dog owners can mix themselves. Peppermint, eucalyptus, clove, citronella, thyme, and rosemary oils are just a few originally used by Native Americans to repel both fleas and ticks, and they're very effective without the risks and safe around kids. Shani warns that not all products are recommended for both dogs and cats, so labels should be read carefully.

Dr. Morgan says that she likes Ectopamine® Flea and Tick Spray for Dogs, which not only kills fleas and ticks but also repels mosquitoes. The frequent reapplication of natural products may be a deterrent for many dog owners, she notes, but the peace of mind might be worth the effort involved since even the safest chemical products aren't completely harmless.

[< Previous page 1, 2, 3,](#)

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For more information

[Tick info and advice](#) from UPenn Veterinary Hospital

[All about ticks on dogs](#)

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