

Flea and Tick Control Glossary

Learn the names, uses, and effects of chemicals found in many preventive products so you can become an expert on keeping your dog parasite free.

Cathy M. Rosenthal

Adulticide: A product that kills adult fleas.

Amitraz: An ingredient used to control ticks found primarily in prescription dog collars.

Fipronil: Used in some monthly spot-on products, applied topically to your dog's neck and shoulder area, to kill adult fleas, larvae, and eggs. Also found in some flea sprays.

Imidacloprid: Used in some monthly spot-on products to kill adult fleas only.

Insect Development Inhibitor: IDIs keep flea eggs from hatching. IDI products are given orally. (Also called insect growth inhibitor – IGI.)

Insect Growth Regulator: IGRs prevent flea larvae from growing into adults. Used in collars and spot-ons.

Lufenuron: A monthly oral IDI treatment that stops flea eggs from hatching.

Methoprene: An IGR, commonly used in combination with fipronil, to prevent flea eggs and larvae from developing.

Moxidectin: Used in monthly spot-on products to kill heartworm and other gastrointestinal parasites.

Nitenpyram: A daily oral treatment that kills adult fleas within 30 minutes.

N-octyl bicyclopheptene dicarboximide: Repels ticks and mites while boosting the performance of other active ingredients in pesticide products. Commonly found in mosquito and flea and tick foggers, sprays, and shampoos.

Permethrin: A pyrethroid insecticide (a synthetic version of pyrethrin) commonly used in spot-on products, flea and tick collars, sprays, and outdoor treatments to kill fleas and ticks and repel mosquitoes. Certain amounts of permethrin can be toxic to cats, so never use a product designed for a dog on a cat.

Piperonyl butoxide: A chemical added to pyrethroid-containing pesticides to enhance mosquito control.

Phenothrin: A pyrethroid insecticide found in dog collars that kills adult fleas and ticks. (Also called d-phenothrin.) Do not use this product on cats.

Pyrethrin: The most widely used insecticide to kill and repel fleas and ticks. Pyrethrins are a natural extract from flowers of the chrysanthemum plant that attacks the fleas' nervous system. Commonly found in dog shampoos, dips, and flea sprays. Pyrethroid is a synthetic version of the product. Many of these products are toxic to cats. Check labels before use.

Pyriproxyfen: An IGR that stops development of flea eggs and larvae.

Selamectin: Used in some monthly spot-on products to kill adult fleas, eggs, and ticks. Also prevents heartworm and other parasites.

Consult your veterinarian before using any flea or tick products. If any side effects occur, contact your vet right away. Also, never use products designed for dogs on cats or other pets. Some chemicals or dosages that are safe for dogs can be toxic to other animals.

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