

# Love Your Pet

## KEEP PESTS AT BAY

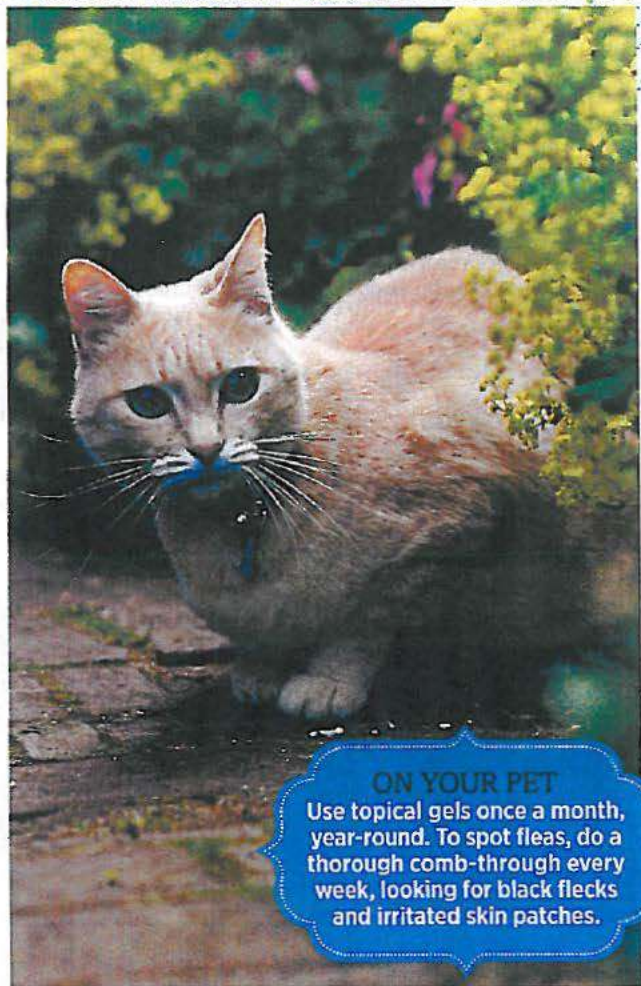
The dog days of summer are prime time for fleas and ticks. This easy prevention guide will help your pets stay bug-free. *by LINDA RODGERS*

### Indoors

- ▶ **BEDDING** Wash your pet's bedding weekly to kill any eggs. Also, look out for pepper-like flakes, which could be flea excrement, a sign that fleas are already present. If the specks become rusty brown when you wet them, they're definitely from bugs, and you'll need to redouble your efforts.
- ▶ **FLOORS** Vacuum under furniture and beds, and toss the vacuum bag ASAP.
- ▶ **EVERYWHERE ELSE** Sprinkle food-grade DE, a nontoxic silica powder (\$10 for a 1-lb bag; *foodgradede.com*), on carpets, floor crevices and beds (your pet's, too). DE dehydrates bugs so they're less likely to survive.

### Outdoors

- ▶ **THE LAWN** Fleas and ticks lurk in tall grass and brush, so mow often and trim back shrubs.
- ▶ **WOODPILES** Stack timber away from your porch. Wood attracts squirrels that can carry fleas right up to your door.
- ▶ **SHADY SPOTS** Treat areas under the deck and beneath bushes with an EPA-approved insecticide, but let it dry before your pets (or kids) play outside.
- ▶ **HIKING TRAILS** Keep your pup on a short leash, and away from tall grass.



### ON YOUR PET

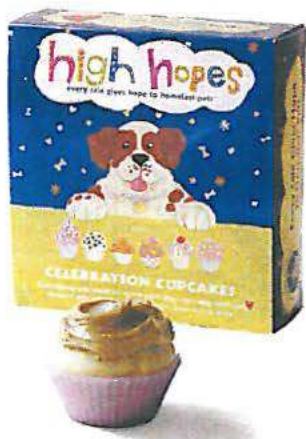
Use topical gels once a month, year-round. To spot fleas, do a thorough comb-through every week, looking for black flecks and irritated skin patches.

SOURCES: Bernadine Cruz, DVM, associate veterinarian, Laguna Hills Animal Hospital, Laguna Woods, CA, and cohost, *The Pet Doctor on Pet Life Radio*. Jill Elliot, DVM, owner, NY/NJ Holistic Vet, and author, *Whole Health for Happy Dogs*.

### {Pet pleaser}

## PUP-CAKES

Throw a party for your pet with High Hopes Celebration Cupcakes! The kit comes with cupcake and frosting mix for dogs, plus six reusable, brightly colored baking cups to make bite-size treats in just 10 minutes. A portion of sale profits goes toward helping homeless pets. (\$9; *highhopesforpets.com*)



### {Ask a veterinarian}

## Q Does my dog need sunblock at the beach?

A Yes, dogs—and cats!—can get sunburned even just romping outside in the yard between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. in summer months. Certain breeds are at greater risk, such as hairless dogs, white dogs with short fur (think Malteses) and those with pale pink skin and noses. Apply a sunscreen formulated for animals (be sure it's SPF 15 or greater) on her nose, and on any area where the sun can hit her by reflecting off sand or pavement: belly, inner legs, groin.

SOURCE: Elisa Mazzaferro, DVM, Cornell University Veterinary Specialists