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(last updated: 09/08/11)

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Flea Control Products Killing Pets: EPA Increases Restrictions



Products that were supposed to be used to treat dogs and [cats](#) for fleas and ticks are killing hundreds and injuring thousands of pets every year, according to the Environment Protection Agency. The agency is now outlining plans to make products safer.

The EPA reported that it will start developing stricter testing and evaluations for tick and flea [treatments](#) that are used to treat pet's

skin. The agency will also start examining labels to make sure which ones need to advise more clearly how to use the products.

The EPA's action follows heightened complaints from owners of pets who say that the "spot-on"

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AdChoices

products have caused reactions in cats and

dogs, ranging from skin irritations to neurological occurrences to even death related instances. Small dogs and cats seem to be the most affected, the EPA reported, especially when given products intended for larger cats and dogs.

Steven Owens, assistant administrator of EPA's Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances, reported that newer restrictions will be placed on tick and flea products, with more alterations for certain products. Owens quoted, "These are poisons. These are products designed to kill fleas and ticks, and they do their jobs."

The EPA is dedicated to better protecting the safety and health of cats and dogs and families, Owens said, but also reported that owners "need to carefully read and follow all labeling before exposing your pet to a pesticide."

Last April, the agency said that it was increasing scrutiny of all topical tick and flea products due to a high number of reported complaints. The EPA reported 44,263 claims of harmful reactions due to topical tick and flea products in 2008, an increase from 28,895 in 2007. Reactions have ranged from skin irritations, seizures and vomiting, to six hundred deaths.

Some cat and dog owners said that their pets suffered welts and burns on their skin, experienced excessive drooling, had uncontrollable shaking, lost control of their legs and experienced other neurological problems associated with the use of these products.

A 2009 study by the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals said that the majority of reactions caused by proper use of topical tick and flea products were mild. Cats were more affected than dogs to deaths and injuries from misuse of the products, the report concluded.

Dr. Steven Hansen, ASPCA veterinarian toxicologist and senior vice



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president for animal health services quoted that “The important take-home message is that although adverse reactions can occur with all flea and tick products, most effects are relatively mild and include skin irritation and stomach upset.”

So help spread the word and share this article with other pet owners! Our pets are dying from these cheap flea and tick products like [Hartz](#) and Bio Spot. Use extreme caution when using flea control products on your pet.

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