

There is a Difference Between Cat and Dog Flea Products

Some insecticides in dog flea treatments can be harmful to cats. Reading labels is important, and it can be tricky. For instance, a common insecticide made from chrysanthemums and found in over-the-counter cat flea preventives is called "pyrethrin." Most cats generally do not react to pyrethrins unless they are in a concentrated form, as they are in some dog flea preventives.

The name of another insecticide, however, that is found only in dog preventives and also in some environmental flea control items sounds a lot like the word pyrethrin, but is vastly different. This insecticide is called "permethrin" and it is actually a synthetic pyrethrin that is stronger, with a longer lasting effect.

Products containing permethrin, as well as other ingredients at higher concentrations and labeled "for dogs only," should never be used on cats. Using these products on cats or even allowing your cat close contact with a dog that has been recently treated should be avoided. Cats are more prone than dogs to adverse reactions to some insecticides for a number of reasons, including their metabolism, their grooming habits and their smaller size.

- 1** Always read labels. Sometimes labels are written in a confusing way or may be too small to read entirely. If there is any doubt of your understanding the label instructions, contact your veterinarian or the manufacturer. Be aware of age requirements and remember never use a product "for dogs only" on your cat.
- 2** Be cautious when using any flea preventive on senior cats or cats who are not at their peak of health. Your veterinarian may recommend the avoidance of any insecticides and using a [flea comb](#) or other non-chemical means. Consult your veterinarian for guidelines on use of flea and tick products on pregnant or nursing cats.
- 3** Never use a product with permethrin on your cat. Although these products have a wide margin of safety for dogs, they can be toxic to cats. Cats exposed to permethrin can develop tremors and/or seizures within hours of application. If you suspect your cat has been exposed to permethrin or other insecticides toxic to cats, see your veterinarian immediately.
- 4** Always observe your cat after applying any flea medication. If you witness unusual behavior, weakness, shakiness or any other behavior you are not sure of, contact your veterinarian.
- 5** When using an environmental spray or fogger, remove any cats (and other pets as well) from the premises for as long as the label states. Make sure all food and water dishes are put away and that food is unable to be exposed to the product. Make sure to air out the premises completely before letting any pets back into the treated area. If you do not understand the usage of an environmental flea control product, we recommend you contact the manufacturer or your veterinarian to explain it before you use it.

At North Shore Animal Hospital we believe that using a cat formulated flea preventative is the best way to protect against flea problems. We recommend monthly topical flea treatment and we offer effective choices for cats.



<http://nshoreanimalhospital.vetsfirstchoice.com/frontliner-plus-cat.html>

<http://nshoreanimalhospital.vetsfirstchoice.com/advantager-ii-cat-and-kitten.html>

<http://nshoreanimalhospital.vetsfirstchoice.com/advantage-multitm-cat.html>