Parasite procedures FAQs

This document is intended to support Cats Protection's 'Routine parasite control procedures for cats in Cats Protection care' document. Please also read the above document which provides more detailed information on Cats Protection's recommended products.

Why has Cats Protection changed from Broadline to Stronghold and Milpro?

The decision to change from Broadline spot-on (fleas, roundworms and tapeworms) to Stronghold spot-on (fleas and roundworms) and Milpro (tapeworms) was based on several factors. Several centres and branches reported concerns that Broadline wasn't effectively killing fleas, a hugely important aspect of parasite control in a shelter environment. A subsequent tender demonstrated that Stronghold and Milpro provided a safe, effective combination treatment for fleas, roundworms and tapeworms (the most significant parasites in a shelter setting) that could be used for the majority of cats in Cats Protection care (see the 'Routine parasite control procedures' document for more information). Furthermore, this change has enabled Cats Protection to save a significant amount of money on parasite control, freeing up funds to allow us to help an even greater number of cats.

Why isn't Cats Protection using Stronghold Plus or another tick product?

The combination of Stronghold and Milpro doesn't prevent or treat ticks. A product similar to Stronghold, Stronghold Plus, is available on the market which treats ticks as well as fleas and roundworms. There are several other veterinary products available which also treat ticks. Cats Protection does not view ticks as a parasite that needs preventative treatment in the shelter environment (advice for owned cats will differ). This is because ticks are generally found in moorland, long grass or woodland. They prefer moist, dark, protected areas and tend to jump from long grass onto a warm-blooded host, such as a cat, when they pass by. The likelihood of a Cats Protection cat in a clean pen or foster room/house being affected by ticks is very low.

It is, however, possible that cats could come in to Cats Protection care with ticks already attached to them. In this case, Frontline spray can be used as an effective treatment against ticks and can be found on the Cats Protection 'Commonly ordered products' list (NB: Frontline spray shouldn't be used on pregnant or nursing queens. It can be used on kittens over two days of age). Ticks attached to a cat can be sprayed directly so there is no need to spray the whole cat. If a cat or kitten in your care has been treated with Frontline spray when first coming into care, please inform your vet of this when they see the cat/kitten for their first check-up. Alternatively, your vet or vet nurse will be able to use a special tool to remove the tick, ensuring that the mouth and head are fully removed (please don't attempt to pull ticks off as the mouthpiece can be left behind and can cause an infection or an abscess).

There is also the option for your branch vet to keep a box of Stronghold Plus in stock only to be used for cats who come into care with a heavy tick burden. Stronghold Plus is POM-V so the cat/kitten must have had a clinical assessment with a vet prior to use. It should not be used on pregnant or lactating queens or on kittens under eight weeks of age or weighing less than 1.25kg.

For the reasons given above, please do not routinely order Stronghold Plus for use on Cats Protection cats. If you find you are having problems with Cats Protection cats and ticks, please consult your branch or centre vet.

Is it safe to use Stronghold and Milpro together? Are we overdosing on roundworm treatment?

Stronghold and Milpro can safely be given together. The Milpro data sheet states that the concurrent use of the active ingredients of both products is well tolerated. Both products treat for roundworms but as the active ingredients in Stronghold and Milpro are different, we're not 'overdosing' on roundworm treatment.

How frequently should Milpro be given?

The frequency of worming depends on the individual cat's circumstance such as lifestyle (indoor vs outdoor) and hunting. Cats become infected with tapeworms by ingesting an infected host such as a flea or a rodent (therefore flea control is very important). They become infected with roundworms by ingesting roundworm larvae found in the environment. Larvae develop from roundworm eggs which are passed in the faeces of infected cats. The eggs themselves are not infectious but within a few days they develop into the infectious larval form. Roundworms can also be passed through milk from a mother cat to her kittens (please see the 'Routine parasite control procedures for cats in care' document for information about worming of young kittens in Cats Protection care. Stronghold and Milpro can only be used in kittens over six weeks of age).

Because Cats Protection cats live in a clean environment with regular removal of faeces, the likelihood of reinfection with worms after the initial worming treatment is very low while the cat remains in Cats Protection care. For cats who are rehomed within three months, we would generally not recommend giving a repeat Milpro tablet unless this was advised by the attending vet. Any cats who are in Cats Protection care for longer than three months should have a three-month veterinary check-up as standard; at this point, we would advise discussing with the attending vet whether they feel a repeat Milpro tablet is necessary.

What should I do if I can't give a cat a Milpro tablet?

Milpro tablets are small and have been designed to be palatable and easy to give. If a cat is difficult to tablet, in the first instance it is worth offering the tablet with some of the cat's favourite food to see if they will eat it voluntarily. You can also ask your branch or centre vet to give the worming tablet when the cat has their initial veterinary check-up. If giving a Milpro tablet isn't possible for an individual cat, then a Droncit spot-on can be applied to provide tapeworm treatment but this is considerably more expensive. 48 hours should be left between Stronghold and Droncit application. The spot-on solutions should be applied in slightly different areas and this be noted in the records, so that if a skin reaction were to occur it is clear which product caused it.

Can I give Stronghold and Milpro as soon as a cat comes into care?

No. Stronghold and Milpro are classified as POM-V, meaning they are prescription only medications and a cat must have a clinical assessment with a veterinary surgeon before they can be given.

How soon after giving a Capstar tablet can I apply Stronghold and give Milpro?

This is at the discretion of the attending vet. If a cat in your care has received a Capstar tablet when first coming into care, please inform your vet of this when they see the cat for their first check-up. They will then be able to advise when the first dose of Stronghold and Milpro can be given.

If a cat is relinquished to Cats Protection and we are told they have been treated for fleas and worms recently, will a repeat treatment be required?

This will depend on what product was given and when, as well as whether the cat is showing clinical signs of fleas or worms. Please try and find out as much detail as possible from the previous owner about what product they gave and when and pass this on to your vet. Your vet can then make a decision about whether a further treatment is necessary.

Can I give Stronghold and Milpro to a cat who is pregnant or lactating?

Stronghold and Milpro can be used in cats during pregnancy and lactation. As with all cases, your branch or centre vet will need to examine the cat before these products are used.

As it is not possible to tablet a feral cat, is it a problem that they will not be treated for tapeworms?

All feral cats that undergo trap, neuter and return (TNR) should receive a dose of parasite treatment under general anaesthesia. Stronghold Spot-On Solution for Cats can be used to treat for fleas and roundworms. If the vet has clinical concerns about tick or tapeworm infestation they may consider using another product alongside Stronghold.

Indorex Household Flea Spray

What is it?

This is a spray which treats the home environment for flea infestations. It kills existing adult fleas for up to two months after application and prevents the development of flea eggs and larvae for up to 12 months.

How to use:

Remove the cat from the foster room. Close all windows and doors. If concerned test a small hidden area of any fabrics first to ensure no colour damage. Shake the can well and spray about 50cm away from the surface being treated. Spray directly onto floors and pay attention to the skirting boards. Leave the room, close the door and wait for half an hour. Return and ventilate the room by opening the windows for at least an hour. Vacuum thoroughly for seven consecutive days after treatment. The vibrations will ensure any unhatched pupae now hatch and will be killed by the Indorex.

Q. This product contains permethrin which is toxic to cats. Should I be worried?

A. No. The concentration of permethrin in the spray is too low to cause any toxicity to cats when used correctly. Indorex has been used for many years in the UK and Virbac claim to have never had a case of toxicity in cats. It is true that permethrin can be toxic to cats especially when dog 'spot-on' flea preparations are used on cats in error – this is due to the dose being significantly larger. By contrast, Indorex is sprayed into the environment, rather than applied directly to a pet. As long as you remove the cats from the environment, spray, leave for half an hour and then ventilate for at least an hour, there is much less exposure. As long as the instructions are followed carefully there should be no risk.

Q. Indorex states that while Indorex is effective against flea eggs for 12 months, it's only effective against live fleas for about two months. If a foster room was re-contaminated with live fleas after this time, then would Indorex need to be applied sooner in order to kill the live fleas, or would this not matter due to the fleas being unable to complete their lifecycle and therefore they wouldn't be able to create a flea infestation?

A. It is unlikely that a foster room would become re-contaminated as using Stronghold will have some environmental protection in terms of preventing the fleas completing their lifecycle as well as killing any live fleas. As we also observe thorough cleaning in our rooms and pens, the risk of continued infestation is very low.