

UNDER THE WEATHER Magic in a pill

Well, almost. Any pill that can prevent ticks, fleas, and mites and keep them away for 3-4 months is almost like magic. Fluralaner. That's the name of the drug. It's tongue-twisting; fortunately, its trade name Bravecto is a lot easier to pronounce!

I was delighted to hear of its availability in India, and I gave the first four tablets to my four dogs. Not a single tick or flea was found the next day, and that's an achievement, considering two of them come to my clinic and get exposed to ticks daily. My clients were delighted too; many of them were buying the tablets from Singapore and USA for three times the price in India!

Ticks and fleas are the bane of a pet parent, and can carry some really deadly diseases. Any pet parent whose pet has had tick or flea-transmitted illness can tell you that prevention is far better than cure. Tick-transmitted diseases can potentially wreak havoc if undetected and untreated, with symptoms ranging from fever to haemorrhages, blood in urine, spleen enlargement etc. Several times tick fever can enter the chronic phase and cause bone marrow suppression. Hence any money spent on prevention is money well spent.

What exactly is Fluralaner and how does it work? This pill affects certain channels called GABA channels in ticks and fleas, causing a breakdown in their nervous system. The ticks then get paralysed and die within a couple of hours. This happens selectively for Arthropods (insects). The drug has been approved by USFDA and EU FDA since 2014 and is completely safe for dogs above the age of six months. Its tolerance and safety has been



**DR SANGEETA
VENGSAKAR SHAH**

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How soon does it act? Fluralaner begins to kill fleas within two hours after administration in a well-controlled laboratory setting. In a European laboratory study, Bravecto killed fleas and ticks and reduced the number of parasites on dogs by >98% within 12 hours for more than 12 weeks. Due to this rapid action, pets with signs of flea allergy dermatitis showed improvement in skin redness, hair loss, and other skin problems like scales, crusts and eczema as a direct result of eliminating flea infestations.

Palatability: most dogs voluntarily eat the chewy tablet within five minutes, while most others eat it when covered with food of their choice, so there is no struggle medicating them.

The tablet can also be used concurrently with other medications, such as vaccines, deworming medicines, antibiotics, and steroids. No adverse reactions were observed as a result of the concurrent use of Fluralaner with other medications.

The cost of course is a concern, but then quality does come at a price, and when you compare the monthly cost of regular tick and flea prevention or the cost of treating tick transmitted diseases, the cost seems reasonable.

Ultimately, whatever you use to prevent ticks and fleas, make sure you do it as a regular programme after discussion with your veterinarian.





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