

# KEV'S GUIDE TO - FLEAS

## What are fleas?

Fleas are tiny, dark brown parasitic insects that infest the coat and skin of pets. They can jump up to 150 times their own length, making the transfer of fleas between your pets difficult to prevent. Their remarkable jumping skills also allow them to transit easily from surrounding environments to your pet.

## How do I know if my pet has fleas?

One of the first signs of a flea infestation in your pet is itching. On inspection of your pet's coat, you will likely see one or more fleas moving around on the surface of your pet's skin. You may also notice tiny black particles that look like dirt; these could be flea droppings. An adult female flea lays an average of 20 to 30 eggs each day. Within a month, the fleas infesting your pet and their environment could be in the thousands.

## How do pets get fleas?

Fleas form cocoons which can remain dormant for astonishingly long periods of time. In some cases, fleas can lay dormant inside a cocoon for up to five months. They inhabit the garden, carpet, and furniture until they are able to hitch a ride on your pet. They jump great distances to find a host and bite both pets and humans.

## Why is it important to treat and prevent fleas?

Fleas are the number one cause of skin disease in pets and can cause problems ranging from simple itchiness to weeping sores, scaly skin, and infection. Some animals are allergic to flea bites (a condition known as Flea Allergy Dermatitis), where one bite sets off an auto-immune reaction. All skin conditions require veterinary treatment.

## Why do fleas spread so quickly?

Fleas breed at an enormous rate. The fleas you see on your dog represent only 5-10% of the fleas within their environment. The rest of the population is represented in the egg and larval stages found in your carpets, furniture, bedding and garden.

## The lifecycle

5% of fleas live in the environment as an adult

95% of fleas live as eggs, larvae, or pupae

for effective flea control, it is essential to break the lifecycle in the environment

**Adult Fleas** – jump onto your dog or cat, feed on their blood and then start laying eggs.

**Eggs** – one female lays an average of 30 eggs per day, which drop off into carpets and bedding before hatching.

**Larvae** – the hatched eggs release larvae which move away from light, deeper into carpets and under furniture before developing into pupae. The larvae feed on organic debris and at this stage can consume tapeworm eggs, allowing them to become an intermediate host for the development of tapeworms.

This lifecycle can take as little as two to three weeks and as long as 12 months. To rid your pet and household from fleas, you must break this cycle. Prevention is the key to flea control. There are many different flea products available to purchase, so choosing the right one for your pet type and age is essential. Speak to your vet to help you pick the right products.

## How do I protect my pet from fleas?

Recent innovations in flea control have made toxic, expensive, and hard to use products a thing of the past.

When undertaking flea control, you must consider the various stages of the lifecycle. In severe infestations, it is necessary to treat both the pet and the environment.

## Control the environment

Adopt the following strategies to bring flea infestations under control:

Get advice from your vet on treatment options specific to your dog as one treatment may not work on all dogs.

In conjunction to your pet's treatment the environment must also be treated.

We can offer a service customised to the conditions, environment, people and pets alike to make sure the infestation is dealt with safely, fast, and efficiently with a guarantee that this will be fixed for you!

Cost is about \$300