



勝利動物醫院
Victory Animal Hospital

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Flea Control in Dogs and Cats

Successful flea control involves both eliminating fleas from your dog and controlling fleas in your environment. Dogs and cats share the same fleas, and fleas can travel from one animal to another. Thus, it is important that all pets in your home are on a flea preventive program.

Treating your pet for fleas has never been easier. With the many choices we have today, we can provide you with the safest and most effective flea preventive for your pet's needs.

However, when it comes to environmental control, it is important to understand the flea life cycle.

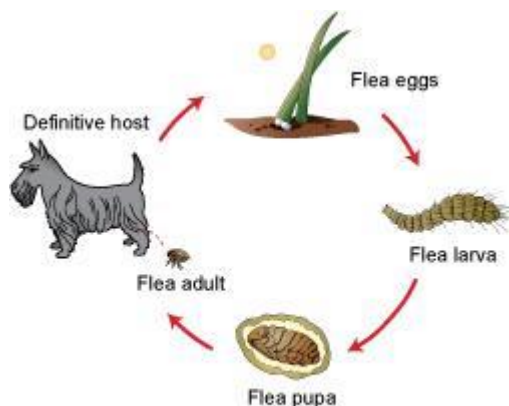


What is the life cycle of the flea?

There are four stages to the flea life cycle, namely the egg, the larva, the pupa and the adult.

Flea eggs are unlikely to be seen without a magnifying glass. Adult fleas lay eggs after taking a blood meal. The eggs are initially laid on the skin but fall off into the environment to continue their life cycle.

Flea larvae feed on organic debris found in their environment and on adult flea feces. They dislike bright light and move deep into carpet fibers or under furniture, organic debris, grass, branches, leaves and soil. Flea larvae prefer warm, dark and moist areas.



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Once it emerges, the **flea adult**, unlike the larvae, is attracted to light and heads to the surface in order to encounter a passing host to feed upon. Two days after the first blood meal, female fleas begin egg production. In normal circumstances the adult female will live up to three weeks, laying approximately 40 eggs per day. The entire life cycle, from egg to adult flea can be completed in as little as 14–28 days depending on environmental conditions.

Apart from irritation, are fleas particularly harmful?

Fleas can cause anemia in heavy infestations, especially in young or debilitated dogs. A single female flea can consume up to 15 times her body weight in blood over the several weeks of her adult life. In addition, fleas can carry several diseases, and act as vectors (hosts) to spread one of the most common tapeworms of the dog and cat.

How do I prevent fleas on my dog?

Successful flea control includes treating both your pet(s) and the environment.

What should I put on my dog?

Shampoos, sprays, powders and topical preparations are all available. There are also very effective products designed for monthly administration that are available through your veterinary clinic; some of these products are conveniently combined with medications to prevent heartworm and intestinal worms. Be sure to consult your veterinarian to choose the most effective and safe flea products for your home and pet.

What about the environment?

Environmental preparations are becoming increasingly sophisticated. Most "quick kill" products are only effective against the adult flea. Your veterinarian can provide you with flea products that contain *Insect Growth Regulators* (IGR) that will prevent maturation of the flea eggs and larvae in addition to chemicals that will kill the adult fleas.



"Before applying any environmental product, we recommend vacuuming your carpet to stimulate the pre-adult fleas to emerge from their protective cocoons."

The newer topical and oral flea preventives will greatly assist you in solving your flea problem. And, by understanding the flea life cycle and following our advice, you and your pet will be flea free in no time.

*This client information sheet is based on material written by: Ernest Ward, DVM
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