

Fleas: Everything pet owners need to know



Fleas are tiny wingless insects which feed on the bloods of animals, including pets and wildlife. They reproduce very quickly producing hundreds of tiny eggs which quickly cause an infestation in the house. Anyone who has had this problem knows how difficult this can be to clear!

They can be very difficult to spot on your pet as they are extremely small and move very quickly. Often you will be more likely to find 'flea dirt' (poo) which are tiny, grainy dark flecks in your pet's coat. Sometimes fleas can cause extreme itching and overgrooming, especially in cats. Then you may not find any fleas or dirt as they are being removed by the pet during grooming.

The best way to prevent an infestation is to use a regular effective flea product which kills fleas. It is much more difficult to clear an infestation once the fleas are in your home. This can take weeks.

A multitude of products are available for the treatment or prevention of fleas. Some products are more effective than others. Not all products available over the counter will be effective in killing fleas. Please ask one of our team for advice on this.

If you have an infestation, you will need to treat all the animals in the household with an effective product. Also, the house will need to be treated as this is where all those nasty eggs will be lurking (95% of the infestation is in the carpets etc). At one point in the flea life cycle the baby fleas turn into a pupal stage which is covered by a hard cocoon. These pupae are really difficult to kill. This is why it takes so long to clear an infestation. You need to wait until these pupal stages hatch so they can be killed by an insecticide.

Clearing an infestation - turn up the heating - the fleas will hatch out quicker if it's warm- vacuum regularly - this will remove some of the fleas/pupae but also the vibration will also encourage them to hatch- wash any pet bedding on a hot wash (don't forget your own bedding if pets have slept there)- treat furniture and carpets with effective flea spray (follow instructions/use test areas)- don't forget to treat the carpets in the car Flea Allergic Dermatitis (FAD)

This is where the pet becomes allergic to flea saliva. Every time a flea bites it causes intense irritation. This leads to intense scratching and scabs especially around the head and neck and at the base of the tail. Often the pet, especially cats, will pull out a lot of fur with resulting bald areas.

Tapeworm

Parasites are clever beasts! Fleas and tapeworms have a combined life cycle where fleas themselves are infested with tapeworm. Any pet which has a flea infestation should also be treated for tapeworm. Again, ask a member of staff for best treatments for this.

Anaemia

Severe flea infestations can cause life threatening anaemia in extreme cases, especially in puppies or kittens. This is due to the sheer amount of blood they are sucking from the pet.

It's much easier to avoid a flea infestation by the regular use of effective insecticides. Please ask one of our team about joining our [365 Care Plan](#) which spreads the cost of your regular preventative health care and gives great savings!