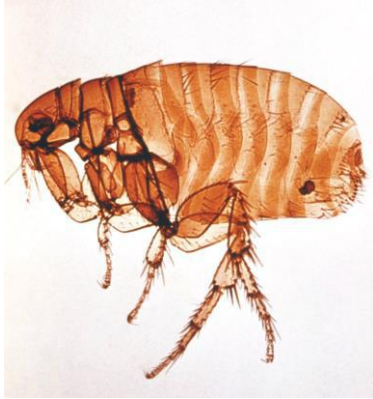


# Fleas and Flea Control

However clean you keep your pet, it is likely that sooner or later it will harbour fleas in its coat and bring them into your house. Fleas are no longer a seasonal problem, because central heating, insulation and double glazing make modern houses the ideal places for fleas to breed all year round.



Fleas are one of the main cause of allergies in dogs and cats. When a flea bites, it injects a small amount of saliva into the bite, which many animals are allergic to. Not all animals are allergic though, which explains why some animals scratch constantly with fleas, whilst others never scratch. This means that even if an animal isn't scratching, it may still have fleas.



It is only adult fleas that bite your pet, and they may only be on a cat or a dog for a few minutes a day when they are feeding. The rest of the time they spend in your house, living in the carpets and furniture. Flea larvae and juvenile fleas are too small to see, and live in carpets, soft furniture and cracks in the flooring, feeding on house dust. Adult female fleas can lay up to 200 eggs in their lifetime, meaning that the fleas you see on your pet are only a small percentage of the actual population living in the environment.

To effectively control a flea population, you must target young and adult fleas, as well as their eggs. To get rid of eggs and larvae, you need to treat the pet's environment.

Effective flea control involves treating ALL of your pets, cats and dogs, even if they show signs of fleas or not. These must be repeated at recommended

intervals. To kill adult fleas you need something effective and long lasting. Shampoos and flea collars are inefficient as they only work for a short time and only reduce the flea population slightly.

We would recommend using PRINOVOX spot-on treatment. This consists of a vial of liquid applied to the skin on the animals' neck, between the shoulder blades. This spreads out over the surface of the skin to kill fleas all over the animal. It is effective for 4 weeks in cats and dogs. It also kills fleas in the environment, as it sticks to the animals' fur and kills any fleas which come into contact with it when the animal sheds hair. As an added benefit it also prevents dogs from getting lung worm whilst killing some intestinal worms too.

If you decide to use the spot-on treatment, it is important to apply it correctly, as if it is put onto the animals' hair rather than its skin, it won't spread effectively. The fur on the neck should be parted to expose the skin and then a small amount should be applied. This should then be repeated to the side of the previous spot until the vial is empty. If your pet has thick fur, then you may end up giving several applications in different places, but they will work more effectively.

For pets which do not like having a spot-on applied or are regularly bathed, we use long-acting flea-control tablets. For dogs there is BRAVECTO, a single tablet which controls fleas for 3 months at a time. For cats, there is COMFORTIS, a single tablet which controls fleas for 1 month. Unfortunately, neither of these stop fleas hatching in your carpets, so if you have a flea problem at home you will also need to use an environmental spray.

An environmental spray such as INDOREX kills adult fleas for 2 months, and prevents eggs and larvae from developing into adult fleas for a year. If you are going to use a spray, then the house should first be thoroughly vacuumed, paying particular attention to the edges of carpet close to the wall, as these are usually the warmest areas because of heating pipes and radiators. In addition, vacuum all cracks in the floorboards and all soft furnishings including cushions and folds in upholstery. Pay particular attention to areas used by your pet for sleeping and areas where your pet spends a lot of time. After vacuuming, empty the bag or vacuum immediately to stop the fleas escaping and re-infesting the house.

The house should then be treated with the environmental spray. All animals, including birds and fish, and children should be moved out of the rooms being treated (large fish-tanks may be securely covered). Following the instructions given on the can, spray the room whilst wearing rubber gloves and proceed one room at a time, treating the whole house. Spray the areas given particular attention during vacuuming, i.e. round wall edges, radiators and sleeping areas. Test spray expensive fabrics first on a small hidden area before covering. Ensure the area is well ventilated when spraying. The house should be re-sprayed at regular intervals.

You should also be aware that fleas are carriers of tapeworms, so a regular, effective worming treatment is advised in conjunction with flea treatment.