


Flea Control Guide for Pet Owners

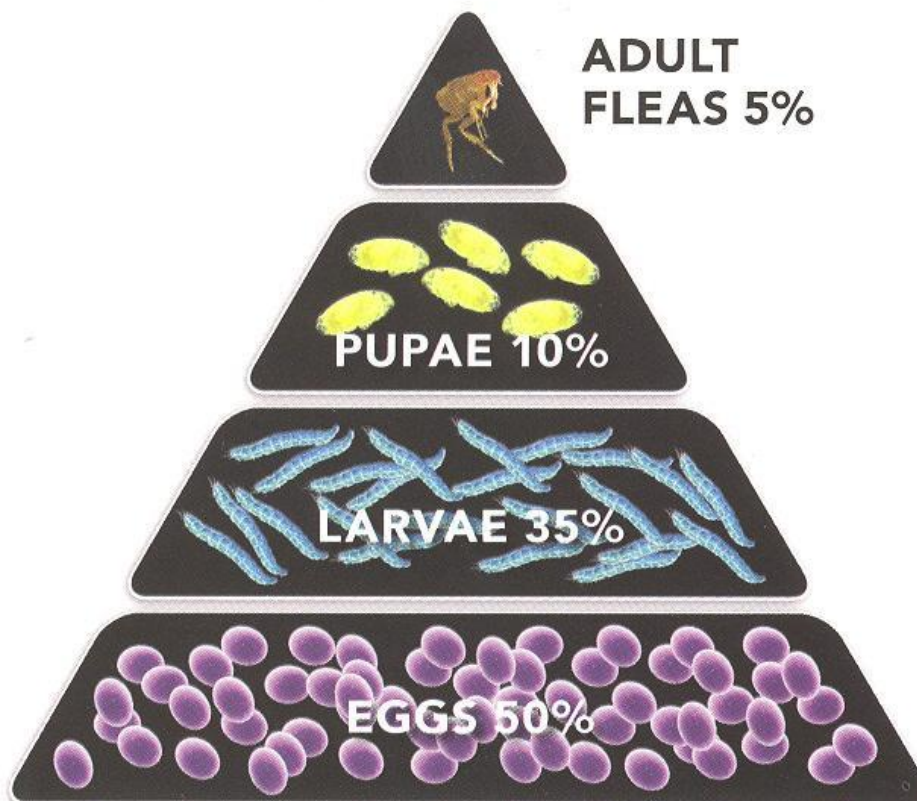


Every pet and home is susceptible to fleas. Use this brochure to find out how you can keep both your pet and your home flea-free.

Essential Facts about Fleas

- ◆ Once on an animal, an adult flea will remain on the pet for the remainder of the flea's life. What a pet owner observes on their pet is only about 5% of the entire flea infestation.
 - ◆ Female fleas lay up to 50 eggs a day in the hair coat of the pet. The eggs fall off into the carpet, furniture, and bedding. Anywhere that your pet spends time may contain eggs. A female flea consumes 15 times its body weight in blood daily and deposits a significant amount of feces—that appear as small black specks, called flea dirt—on your pet.
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- ◆ Flea larvae are maggot-like in appearance when they hatch from the egg. They avoid light and will remain hidden in carpet fibers, bedding, and other dark places, indoors and outside, where your pet spends time.
 - ◆ The flea larva develops into a cocoon-like pupa, then into an adult. The adult may emerge immediately from its cocoon or remain dormant for many months before emerging to feed on a host. This prolonged life cycle and delayed emergence is the main reason why you may still see adult fleas on your pet and in your home for several weeks after the administration of a flea treatment. This can occur even when using products that are recommended by your veterinarian.

- ◆ Once fleas emerge from the cocoon, they will immediately seek a host. This can be your dog, your cat, or even you. Within seconds to minutes after jumping on your pet, fleas feed on the pet, taking a blood meal and mate. Female fleas begin to lay eggs within 48 hours of acquiring a host, such as your dog or cat.
- ◆ Pets acquire fleas from an environment infested with developing immature eggs, larvae, and pupae.



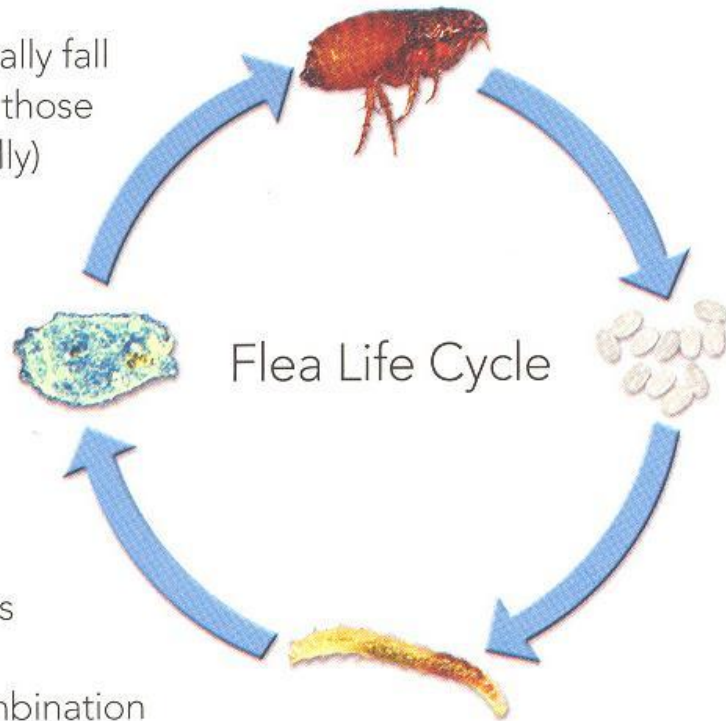
Essential Flea Prevention and Control Measures

- ◆ Read all labels and administer the product according to directions. **Do not miss a dose!**
- ◆ Use a flea preventive on all animals in the house, even if they remain indoors. A single missed treatment on any pet can allow fleas to reproduce and reinfest the home. Missed or inappropriately administered doses may be the greatest cause of home flea infestations.
- ◆ Use the flea control products that are recommended by your veterinarian. In general, flea shampoos, dips, and collars are ineffective for long-term control.
- ◆ Flea control should be used all year, even in cooler climates.
- ◆ Pets can acquire fleas any time they enter infested areas. This could include dog parks or areas frequented by other pets or even wildlife, such as opossums and raccoons.



Understanding Flea Products

- ◆ Flea products generally fall into two categories, those given by mouth (orally) and those applied topically on the pet's skin.
- ◆ Many experts recommend the use of an insect growth regulator (IGR) which interferes with egg or larval development in combination with a product that kills adult fleas. IGRs and adulticides should be used monthly and adulticides as needed. This combination is not only effective in eliminating flea infestations, it is excellent long-term prevention and protection of the pet.
- ◆ Remember, unlike some so-called "natural" flea products, veterinarian-recommended flea products have been extensively tested for efficacy and safety and therefore can be given with confidence.



What to do if you see fleas on your pet.



- ◆ First of all, there is no need to panic. Don't try to solve the problem on your own. While there are many excellent products on the market, some may not be suitable for your pet—this is especially true for cats. Ask your veterinarian for help. They are trained professionals who can help you select the right product.
- ◆ Understand that these products do not completely repel fleas or kill fleas instantly. It often can take from several hours to a couple of days to kill newly acquired fleas. That is why a combination of preventive flea treatments aimed at eliminating early flea stages, along with adulticides that target adult fleas are often recommended to pet owners.
- ◆ Consider your environment. If your home becomes heavily infested with fleas you may need to treat the premises. Your veterinarian can advise you as to the best course of action, which often will include thorough and repeated vacuuming of the carpet, weekly washing of pet bedding, and the possible application by yourself or a licensed professional of insecticides and insect growth regulators on your carpet. Outdoor treatments of shaded pet resting areas are rarely necessary.

If you need additional information, go to www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/entml2/MF760.PDF. The Companion Animal Parasite Council also has an excellent website: www.capcvet.org.

Remember: Do not miss a dose or application and always give products according to the label directions. All animals in a household must be on flea control, even if they spend all their time indoors!

