

KEEP FLEAS IN CHECK

Treat your pets – and your home

Fleas can be a problem even in the most spotless home or on the cleanest pet. Treat your pet – and your home – and keep fleas away.

CHECK FOR FLEAS

- Q Is your pet scratching?
- Q Can you see tiny dark specks in his/her fur, or small brown-black insects scurrying about?
- Q Do you have any unaccounted for insect bites yourself?

»» IF YOU'VE ANSWERED 'YES' TO ANY OF THESE QUESTIONS – IT COULD MEAN FLEAS.

If you are in any doubt, a good way to check for fleas is to groom your pet using a fine-toothed comb held over a white surface such as a piece of kitchen towel. Any fleas or flea droppings will be deposited on the surface. Add a few drops of water and if the droppings turn reddish brown it is very likely your pet has fleas.

Flea facts

- **Fleas are a type of external parasite.** There are different species of fleas, such as dog fleas, cat fleas, rabbit fleas and human fleas, although many species of fleas can infest more than one host species.
- **Fleas are blood-sucking parasites** as adults only. Adult fleas have mouthparts which are adapted for piercing skin and sucking blood from their host.
- A flea can **live from between 14 days to one year.**
- A female flea can **lay up to 50 eggs per day** and 1,500 in a lifetime.
- Some types of **flea can leap more than a hundred times their own body length!**
- **Regular flea treatment will help reduce the chances** of your cat or dog getting tapeworms.
- It is estimated that **95 per cent of flea eggs, larvae and pupae live in the environment** – on beds, rugs, carpets and sofas – not on your pet.
- You can prevent fleas becoming a problem by **regularly treating both your pet and your home.** This may need to be done all year round if your home is centrally heated.



Flea treatment

- It is essential to treat both your pet and your home, as fleas can survive in the environment without a host for many months.
- Visit your vet for advice on the best products to treat your pet and your home.
- Clean bedding regularly and vacuum furniture, floors and skirting boards thoroughly to help destroy fleas at each stage of their life cycle.
- Throw away the dust bag from your vacuum after each use to prevent any flea eggs and larvae from developing.
- **Only give your pet a recommended flea treatment – ideally as prescribed by a vet for your individual pet.** Products suitable for one species may not be suitable for another – for example, dog flea treatments contain permethrin, an insecticide that is safe for use on dogs but which is highly toxic to cats.

Fleas can cause all sorts of problems

- Not only can flea bites make your pet uncomfortable and itchy but he/she could also be hypersensitive to flea saliva and suffer an allergic reaction.
- Fleas feed on blood, so young or frail animals can become weak and even die as a result of blood loss.
- Flea larvae can become infected with tapeworm eggs. If your pet eats an infected flea when grooming he/she can also become host to this parasite. If your pet has fleas you should also make sure he/she is treated for worms.
- Fleas can also pass diseases to your pets. For example, myxomatosis is a serious disease in rabbits which can be spread by fleas.