

## 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.



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# Keep fleas in check

Treat your pets – and your home



**Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals**

Telephone: 0300 1234 999 | [www.rspca.org.uk](http://www.rspca.org.uk)

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**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

- Is your pet scratching or losing hair?
- Can you see tiny dark specks in their fur, or small brown-black insects scurrying about?
- 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.

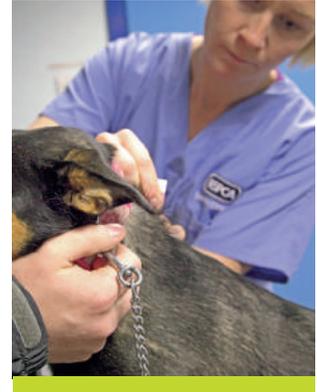
Any fleas or flea droppings will be deposited on the surface. Add a few drops of water and if the droppings turn reddish brown it is very likely your pet has fleas. Check with your vet if you are concerned.



## 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 they 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 they can also become host to this parasite. If your pet has fleas you should also make sure they are 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.