

FLEA FACTS

Fleas are small, brown, wingless insects with a pair of powerful legs used for jumping from host to host. There are more than 2000 species of fleas, but the most common flea found on dogs and cats is *Ctenocephalides felis*.

The female flea lays her eggs on your pet and they fall off into the environment. Flea eggs typically hatch in 1 to 10 days. Dryness, high heat and extreme cold can keep the eggs from hatching.

One female flea can be responsible for an infestation of more than 20,000 adults within 60 days. All animals, but especially those of small size can lose a considerable amount of blood each day when heavily infested.

Fleas can also be responsible for tapeworm infestation of your pet. Signs of tapeworm are small rice-like worms around the anus or in the stool. Diagnosis is usually made by visual exam since the eggs are difficult to find in a routine fecal exam.

Some animals are actually allergic to flea saliva and one flea bite can cause an animal to scratch for 1-2 months. Signs of flea allergy include hair loss and sores, especially near the tail.

FLEA CONTROL

There have been many advances in flea products used on pets. Many products are much easier to use and work better than the old flea collars, shampoos, etc.

Frontline is a topical flea and tick repellent that is applied once a month on the back of the pet's neck. It absorbs throughout the body and is waterproof (no baths 2 days before and 2 days after application).

Program and Sentinel (Program + heartworm preventative) are oral medications that are given once a month with food to help prevent fleas. They do not kill the adult fleas, but act on the eggs to prevent them from hatching and therefore prevent a major infestation. Program is available for cats as a 6-month injection.

Capstar is an oral medication that will kill the fleas on your pet within 30 minutes. This is a good product to use when you are introducing a new pet with fleas into your environment.

Revolution is a topical medication that kills adult fleas and prevents flea eggs from hatching for one month. In cats, it also prevents heartworm, roundworms, hookworms, and ear mites. In dogs, it also prevents heartworm, scabies, ear mites, and American dog ticks.

General cleaning (sweeping, mopping, dusting and vacuuming) can also help to reduce the levels of fleas, larva and eggs in your household.