

Are You Fighting Fleas?

Guelph, ON - With more than 2,000 flea species in the world, it's a wonder your pets only have to grapple with a handful. Still, fleas are no walk in the park. Proper treatment can take several months to reach the desired effect: total elimination.

What are fleas?

Fleas are tiny parasitic insects that, when full-grown, look like reddish-brown sesame seeds.

Adult fleas will feed, mate and lay eggs on their host. Designed to pierce skin, their mouth parts allow them to suck the host's blood to obtain nutrients for egg production. Animals also serve as vehicles for dispersing eggs. Flea eggs and flea feces ("flea dirt") commonly fall off pets, landing in areas of your home (i.e. bedding, carpet and baseboards).

Larvae hatch from flea eggs in the environment and feed on "flea dirt" and other organic debris. Left to mature in low traffic areas with sufficient heat and humidity, flea larvae pupate and emerge from cocoon in as early as 2-4 weeks in proper conditions.

Why are they harmful?

Every day, female fleas consume 15 times their weight in blood. This blood loss can cause anemia in an ill adult, or small and young pets.

Fleas do not need to appear in large numbers, initially, to result in infestations. Within weeks, a few untreated fleas can become a health concern for the entire household.

Fleas are known for bringing "gifts" along with their appetite. Tapeworm infection, allergic reactions, cat scratch disease and blood parasites are all common maladies fleas can cause their host.

What are signs your pet has fleas?

The prevailing sign for fleas on pets is excessive itching. However, flea bites also cause severe discomfort. They can drive your pet to chew or bite its skin around its tail or rump.

Unfortunately, by the time you notice this restless behaviour, fleas have already transmitted infections to your pet and started to lay eggs.

How to treat and prevent fleas?

Once a flea infestation has been detected, your veterinary health care team can help you determine the appropriate treatment. Several months of treatment may be required to clear a flea infestation.

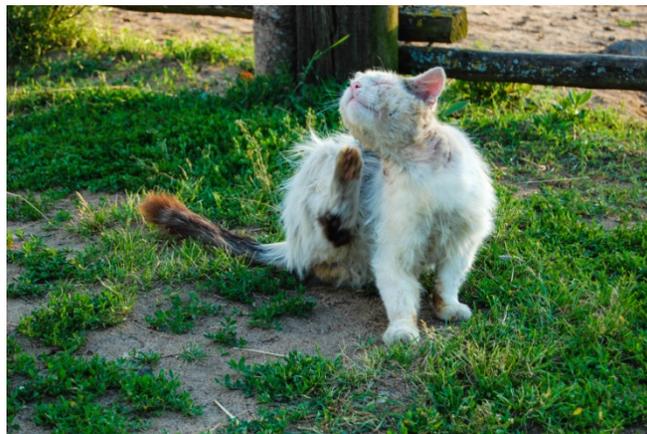
Be proactive in your fight against fleas. Talk to your veterinary health care team about flea control and prevention for your pets.

Contact:

Lise Rodgers
Canadian Animal Health Institute
519-763-7777



Several months of treatment may be required to clear a flea infestation. Talk to your veterinary health care team to see what treatment options are right for your pet.



Itching is the main sign of fleas, but flea bites can also cause severe discomfort. They can drive your pet to chew or bite its skin around its tail or rump. By the time you notice this behaviour, the fleas have already started to lay eggs.