

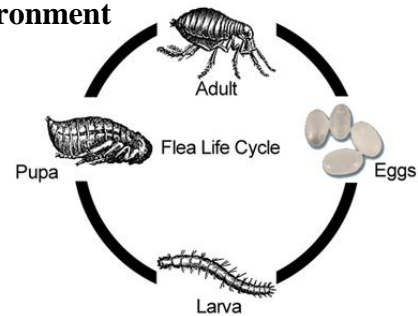
## FLEA TREATMENT AND PREVENTION

Both dogs and cats can play host to the cat flea (*Ctenocephalides felis*); it is brown/black in colour and 1-3mm in length. The adult fleas live on your pets and proceed to lay eggs onto their coat which then fall off into the environment (eggs are most commonly found in your animal's bedding). These eggs then hatch and turn into larvae and pupa in the environment before jumping back onto your pet. The lifecycle can take as little as 2 weeks to be completed but some adult fleas can remain dormant in the environment for up to 6 months. Fleas try to avoid light so the most areas to locate them are around the head/neck area, abdomen and tail base.

**As a rough guide: 1 flea on an animal = 95 fleas in the environment**

### Signs of flea infestation:

- Excessive licking, chewing, biting at the skin
- Red, inflamed, itchy skin
- Alopecia (hair loss)
- Hot spots or scabs
- Tapeworms in the stools
- 'Flea dirt' or flea droppings in the coat – looks like black dirt specks
- Some severe infestations can cause anaemia (pale gums, lethargy), especially in young animals



Some animals are allergic to flea saliva making the symptoms more severe. This is commonly referred to as 'Flea Allergy Dermatitis' or 'FAD'. One bite can make them itchy for several weeks and it is important to note that you may not necessary see any evidence of fleas on these patients.

**How to treat for fleas:** There are many different products available to treat fleas, however some older products have developed resistance over time. All animals in the household should be treated and to treat the surrounding environment, especially in heavy infestations (ie. vacuum frequently, wash bedding in hot soapy water, flea bomb the house).

Currently the products we recommend and stock for flea prevention are:

**Dogs: Bravecto, Comfortis, Nexgard, Revolution**

**Cats: Activyl, Comfortis, Revolution**

Some products are not sufficient for FAD sufferers so we recommend checking with your veterinarian to make sure you are using the best product for this condition. It is also important to note that some flea products are toxic to certain species so you should always read the instructions carefully before use.

**As a general rule, flea treatment needs to be continued for a minimum period of 3 months before results are expected.**

