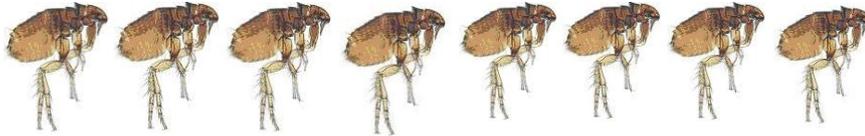


Fleas and your pet



Flea infestation is still one of the most common health problems seen in veterinary practice. Flea bites cause intense itching, and often lead to more serious skin problems as the pet tries to relieve the itching by scratching, biting or rubbing their skin.

Fleas need to feed on blood from our pets in order to survive and breed. They can also bite people causing an irritating rash. As well as causing skin problems and allergies, fleas can also transmit other organisms in their saliva, for example some species of tapeworm.

Fleas can be difficult to get rid of. When adult fleas bite your pet, they lay eggs which drop off into carpets, bedding, upholstery or anywhere else your pet goes. These eggs are very hardy and can survive here for up to a year, waiting until your pet comes past again. They then hatch out and start to feed, completing the lifecycle.

Fleas pass easily between all dogs and cats in a household. In order to get rid of an infestation, it is important to control the eggs waiting in the environment, not just the adults on your pet. The flea season was originally thought to last from spring to autumn, as adult fleas die off in very cold weather. However, central heating means that they can now survive and thrive all year round in the house.

How can I get rid of fleas?

We recommend a product called Frontline Combo. This safe and effective treatment is applied to your pet's skin in an easy spot-on formulation. It remains on your pet for a long period (8 weeks in dogs, 6 weeks in cats).

It contains an ingredient called Fipronil which kills any adult fleas which jump onto your pet during the period of treatment. This helps stop your pet itching and reduces the incidence of disease transmission via the flea's saliva.

A second ingredient also ensures that eggs laid in the environment are sterile and will not hatch out into live fleas. This helps get rid of the household infestation.

For heavy infestations, we also recommend using a household spray to kill any existing eggs and larvae. These are available from the surgery.

Shampoos may help to kill large populations of live fleas on your pet, but they have no lasting action and your pet will quickly become re-infested. Using shampoos frequently will reduce the effectiveness of Frontline Combo.

Many non-prescription spot-on flea treatments are available in pet shops and supermarkets. Many of these have no proof of effectiveness and use ineffective or outmoded chemicals. We do not recommend using these products.