

Fleas fact sheet

Adult fleas live exclusively as parasites of warm-blooded animals, like cats and dogs. Cat fleas are responsible for 75% of all flea infestations. Cat and dog fleas will feed from humans usually when there are no animals around, but this is not their first choice.



Life cycle

The flea eggs 0.5 mm long are pearly white, oval and slightly sticky and generally found on the hair, bedding or clothing of the host. The threadlike larvae (1.5 mm) hatch in approximately a week and thrive in dark humid places. After 2-3 weeks they grow to 5mm long and spin their cocoons for pupation. Fleas formed in cocoons may 'overwinter' at this stage but emerge by the stimulation of vibration, usually of the host. This is why attacks sometimes take place when a property has been left empty e.g. when a house is for sale, or the host returns from holiday. In favourable conditions the life cycle is normally completed in 4 weeks.

Fleas can only lay eggs after taking blood from the host animal.

Why you may have fleas and not have an animal

1. In the summer months fleas can survive outside and be carried into the house.
2. Visitors may have animals and transport fleas into your home.
3. You can visit other people with animals and transport fleas back to your house.
4. Moving into a property, you could inherit a flea problem from the previous occupier.

Dealing with fleas

The floors of your property will be covered by a layer of insecticide that will dry to a very fine powder, it is odourless and invisible. It has a very good residual effect, which means that it will continue to work for some time if left undisturbed. Adult fleas will be killed within a few days but the floor should not be vacuumed, swept or washed if possible for 7-10 days after treatment.

As the eggs hatch and develop, you might find fleas reappearing 7-10 days after treatment.

This is quite normal and provided the insecticide remains in place, it will kill the adults as they emerge. If you have a cat or dog at the premises, it should also be treated for fleas without delay using a veterinary recommended treatment. If you require further information on this, please consult your vet.

Causes of re-infestation

1. Vacuuming before the 7-10 day period.
2. Bringing more fleas from other premises.
3. Not treating your pet or not following the product's instructions.