

## Are you seeing fleas or flea dirt on your pet?

### Not sure how to tell whether your pet has fleas:

Using a flea comb, comb through your pet's coat and look for moving adult fleas and flea dirt. Any specks of dirt that you pull out may be flea dirt which is basically undigested clotted blood. In order to determine for sure whether the specks you see are from the flea dirt place the dirt and any hair on to a wet white paper towel. The undigested blood will bleed out on to the towel thus indicating that the specks are indeed flea dirt.

The fleas that you see on your pet represent only 5-10% of the fleas present in your pet's environment. The rest of the population is in the egg and larval stages found in your carpet, furniture, pet bedding and your yard.

If you are not seeing any fleas on your pet use a flea preventative year-round to keep flea infestation from happening. Winter time fleas can complete their life cycle inside your home, so it is important to implement flea prevention year round.



### Yes, I see fleas and/or flea dirt on my pet!

If you see flea dirt or live fleas you'll need to treat all areas of your pet's living quarters and repeat that treatment as recommended by the products use.

To understand better why this flea treatment plan is necessary it's important to understand the life cycle of the flea.

## Life cycle of the flea:

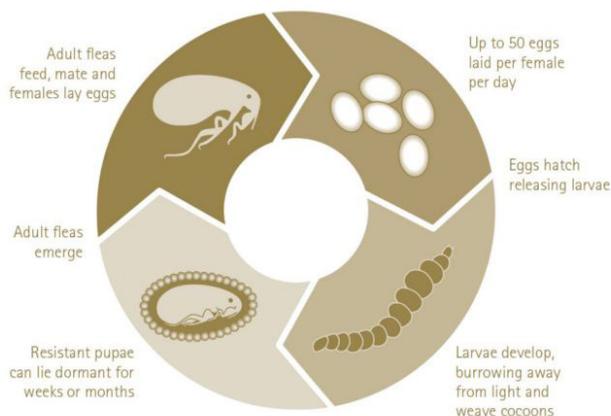
### Egg ⇒ larvae ⇒ pupae (or cocoon stage) ⇒ adult flea

Just 24 hours after her first blood meal the adult female flea can lay eggs, 20-30 eggs daily.

The life cycle can take 12 to 174 days depending upon conditions – warmth and higher humidity encourages the life cycle to be faster and more eggs to be laid.

The cocoon stage is immune to most flea treatments due to its protective shell. The cocoon stage can stay dormant for up to a year if conditions are not right. As a pet owner, you want the pupae or cocoon to turn into an adult so treatments can kill the adult fleas.

Raising the humidity and temperature in the home along with the warmth and vibrations from a vacuum will encourage the cocoon to move on to the adult stage.



## Tips for helping prevent fleas:

- Use a flea preventative year round, keep grass and leaves in the yard cleaned up as fleas hate sunlight. Periodically comb your pet looking for signs of fleas and flea dirt.
- Vacuum your home and wash your pet's bedding regularly. Periodically hang door mats, rugs and other non-washable items in direct sunlight.
- Follow usage directions. Most treatments are going to recommend repeating 2 to 4 weeks after the first application. This is to catch the fleas that have now hatched since your initial treatment.
- Natural or chemical treatment methods are available:
  - Natural products are great for those who do not wish to use chemicals on their pets or those whose pet has had a negative reaction to chemical flea treatments in the past.
  - Natural products often contain essential oils such as geranium, clove, cinnamon, lemongrass, lavender and more. These natural choices are available in all categories of treatment—products to treat the pet, the home and yard.

## Tips for flea treatment:

Fleas cause itching, which leads to scratching which causes open wounds & infection. Fleas can result in diseases, hair loss and even anemia.

When treating your pet, home, and yard, it's important to follow all directions - including how often to treat.

### Treating the Pet:

Shampooing - start the lathering at the neck of the pet so that the fleas cannot run to the head, where it is more difficult to treat them. Use precaution when treating young and or pregnant and lactating pets.

Use a flea comb to locate fleas and flea dirt during and after shampooing.

Sprays and powders that are noted on the directions as being safe to APPLY directly to the pet. Natural products that can be given internally to the pet to mask the odor of the CO<sub>2</sub> coming from your pet, this is what attracts the fleas to the pets—the CO<sub>2</sub> that is exhaled when breathing.

Cap guard is a product that can be given internally to kill adult fleas on the pet. This product only kills the adult fleas but can be repeated when the owner sees more fleas on their pet.

### Treating the home and pet bedding:

Powders, sprays, foggers and a flea trap and capture pads, regularly vacuum and when finished empty the contents of the vacuum outside the home in a trash receptacle. For vacuums with no bags, disinfect the canister to remove and kill any eggs and larvae stage fleas.

Powders and sprays safe for use inside the home on surfaces including carpets, furniture, pet bedding etc that your pet frequents.

### Treating the yard:

Because fleas hate sunlight, you'll want your grass to be cut short and leaves to be raked up.

Spray your yard with a yard spray as directed as the yard is an area that your dog spends time in. If you do not spray your yard the fleas will continue breeding in the warmer months outside and jump right back on your pet to be carried back inside your home.

Not spraying the yard means all of the treatments that you have done inside the home and to the pet will not be as effective because the fleas will continue reproducing outdoors.

## Precautions:

- If your animal does not have fleas and ticks you can use these preventative products to keep them away
- We carry many common spot on chemical treatments for dogs and cats with fleas and ticks
- These are often not nearly enough if the cat or dog already has fleas, remember only 5 % of the fleas are actually seen on the animal, the rest are living in the animal's environment
- Spot on treatments include: Frontline, Advantage, Advantix, Petlock and more
- These are chemical treatments that you apply to the dog or cat as directed. Reapply as directed.
- Whether you use natural ingredient treatments or chemical treatments it is critical to follow all directions.
- Some products are only recommended for puppies and kittens over a certain age.
- Many of the products recommend the use of safety equipment such as gloves.
- Due to the sensitive nature of companion birds, it is recommended that you consult with your vet on the best dog and cat flea treatment that can be safely used in the vicinity of companion birds. It may be best to remove the bird from the home before using flea and tick treatments on your dogs and or cats. Dust from powders, even natural powders, could cause health threats to your companion bird.
- Do not use dog products on cats. Nor should you use cat products on dogs. Some chemicals used in dog products for example: permethrin, can be fatal if they comes in contact with cats.
- Foggers have very specific instructions such as but not limited to:
  - Vacating the home of all pets and people.
  - Covering all fish tanks, or if possible removing fish tanks from the room(s) to be treated.
  - Turning off the pilot lights.
  - Ventilating the area after use and before any pets or people are allowed back in the room.
  - Washing any food surfaces that the fogger mist may have come in contact with.
  - We recommend placing the fogger on newspaper before starting it as the fogger may spritz liquid on to the flooring when it starts and finishes. This spritz can be harmful to surfaces.

Additional questions? Please call our store at (717)299-5691 or stop by for assistance.