



## **Flea Control**

Successful flea control takes a two-pronged attack. You must treat all pets and the contents of the home. In many cases the yard needs to be treated, too. Outlined below are some essential facts about fleas and how to treat your pet(s) and your home.

### **Flea Facts**

There are 4 stages in the flea's life cycle: adult flea, egg, larvae, and pupae.

1. The Adult Flea - Adult fleas spend most of their time on the animal feeding and laying eggs. This is the little brown bug that you may see hopping around or crawling on your pet and it is literally the "tip of the iceberg" in regards to what else is in the home.
2. The Flea Egg - Adults lay up to 50 eggs per day on the pet. However, the eggs soon fall off the animal into the carpeting, on bedding, beneath the cushions of furniture, and wherever else your pet spends time. Think of your pet as a walking salt shaker leaving flea eggs wherever it goes. Flea eggs make up approximately 50% of the flea population, and hatch in 14 to 28 days.
3. The Flea Larvae - After hatching, flea eggs develop into tiny white worm-like larvae that feed on adult flea feces and other organic debris. They dislike light so they tend to crawl deep into carpet fibers or under furniture. They thrive in warm, moist, dark areas.
4. The Flea Pupae - Before becoming adult fleas, the larvae transform into pupae inside a cocoon. The cocoons are sticky and quickly become covered in debris which acts as camouflage. During this time they are resistant to insecticides applied to the environment. Pupae can survive inside of a cocoon for up to 9 months. This is why it will take multiple treatments of the pet and the environment to bring your flea problem under control. You must treat beyond the time adults will be hatching from the cocoons.

### **Treating your Pet**

Remember that adult fleas spend virtually their entire life on the pet. For flea treatment to be effective every pet in the home environment (all indoor and outdoor pets with fur) **MUST** be treated for fleas. The easiest and most effective way to protect your dog and kill adult fleas is to use a monthly dose of either Simparica, Simparica Trio, or Vectra 3D for a minimum of 6 consecutive months. Ideally, all of your dogs should be treated once monthly all year. All cats in the household should be treated with Revolution Plus or Effipro. Inexpensive “spot-on” applications found anywhere other than at a veterinary clinic may not be as effective and can potentially be toxic to pets. Flea collars and flea baths are also ineffective in treating a flea infestation.

## **Treating the Home**

Your pet’s environment is home to 90% of the flea population – the eggs, larvae, and pupae. Treating the home will allow the flea infestation to be brought under control more quickly. Home treatment requires:

- 1. Washing, dry cleaning, or destroying all pet bedding.** Wash in hot water with bleach and laundry soap.
- 2. Vacuuming floors and furniture.** Vacuuming removes many of the eggs, larvae, and pupae developing within the home. Vacuuming also stimulates pre-adult fleas to emerge from their cocoons, hastening their contact with the insecticide residues from the premise spray (Knockout Spray) that will be applied. By raising the nap of the carpet, vacuuming also improves the premise spray’s penetration to the base of the carpet fibers where the developing fleas live. Vacuum thoroughly, especially in areas the pet rests or sleeps. Make sure to vacuum along the edges of the rooms and beneath cushions, beds, rugs, and furniture. After vacuuming, either discard the vacuum bag in an outdoor trash container, or empty the vacuum canister into an outdoor trash container then spray the interior of the canister with Knockout Spray.
- 3. Mopping all tile, hardwood, and linoleum floors.** Use very hot water to mop all hard floors
- 4. Applying a premise spray.** We recommend using Knockout Area Treatment to treat the house. It kills adult fleas and will control larvae for 120 days. Always read and follow the label directions. Prior to applying the premise spray, remove all the pets from the home, cover any fish tanks or aquariums, and disconnect their aerators. Only the person applying the insecticide should be in the home during its application. People and pets need to remain off treated surfaces until the spray has dried. It is essential that the application be thorough.

You need to spray carpets, throw rugs, under and behind beds, furniture, cushions and pet beds. Pay particular attention to the areas where the pet spends time or sleeps because these will be the areas where the most flea eggs, larvae, and pupae will be concentrated. Hardwood, tile, and linoleum floors need to be treated only at the baseboard area.

Expect to see some fleas for one or two months following the initiation of treatment. Provided all infested areas were treated correctly initially, these “survivor” fleas are probably newly emerged adults which have not yet succumbed to the insecticide. Continue vacuuming frequently.

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