



Humane Organization for the Prevention of Euthanasia



## FACTS ABOUT FLEA CONTROL



1. The cat flea is the species of flea that causes problems for you and your pet. Upon hatching from the pupal cocoon, a flea will jump on your pet and begin feeding within 24 hours. At that time, the female will start laying eggs. One female flea can lay between 40-50 eggs per day in your pet's haircoat which then fall into the environment. The eggs will hatch into a larval form and remain there for a few days up to several weeks depending on environmental conditions. After the larval stage, the fleas will go into a cocoon stage (pupa) which can last between 14 days and 6 months. Upon emerging, the new adult will jump on your pet and the life cycle starts all over again. Once an adult flea begins feeding on your pet, it will stay there it's entire life span. Since the pupal stage can be long, **continual flea prevention is recommended.**
2. Wildlife such as possums, coyotes, and raccoons carry fleas and can bring them into your environment. Possums can carry 4 times more fleas on them than your pet can. Wildlife can contaminate your environment with flea eggs that will later hatch into adults and jump on your pet or the fleas can jump on you and **you can carry them into the house and onto your pet. This means that your pet can get fleas even if they never go outside.** Common areas in the outdoor environment to find flea eggs are shaded areas, areas with moist soil, around trees and shrubs, and around birdfeeders. Bird seed attracts possums to your yard and these possums will contaminate your environment with flea eggs.
3. Once you have a flea infestation, it can take 3-8 weeks and sometimes longer to get rid of the fleas. **Don't wait until you have a flea problem to start treatment.** Be proactive and keep flea prevention on your pet at all times.
4. The best way to stop fleas is to prevent their reproduction. Remember, **no product kills instantly and none of them repel fleas.** Start by placing flea prevention on your pet. Make sure you treat all pets in your house (dogs, cats, ferrets, rabbits). There are several products available; some are used topically and others are used internally. Killing the adults within the first 24 hours of them jumping on your pet will keep them from laying eggs and contaminating the environment. This will stop the flea life cycle. However, the eggs, larvae, and pupa in the environment also must be taken care of or you will continue to see more live fleas. If you feel your product is not working, it may be newly hatching fleas from the environment that are now on your pet. Give the product you are using at least 2-3 months before you decide it is not working. If you switch products too soon you may not have given the product enough time to affect the fleas in the environment.
5. There are several products to choose from. Some are applied topically and some are given in treat or pill form. Some examples of very good monthly flea preventatives are the following: Topical products for dogs are Vectra, Activyl, Combiva and Revolution. Oral flea medicine for dogs are Comfortis, Nexgard, Bravecto, and Simparica. If you don't have a flea infestation you may consider using Sentinel. Sentinel is a combination of heartworm and flea prevention. It does not kill the fleas but keeps them from reproducing so they will not make more fleas and infest the environment. H.O.P.E carries topical Vectra for dogs as well as oral Comfortis and Sentinel for

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dogs. Topical products for cats are Revolution, Cheristin, Vectra, Activyl, and Combiva. An oral flea medicine for cats is Comfortis. If you prefer a flea collar, Seresto is the best choice for dogs and cats as it works for 8 months at killing fleas and ticks. H.O.P.E carries topical Combiva and Revolution for cats as well as oral Comfortis for cats. All other flea collars, shampoos, dips, and powders are no longer effective against fleas.

6. Home environment treatment of fleas will help lessen the number of fleas in the environment allowing an infestation to be under control quicker. Vacuum every day or every other day and then dump the bag or contents outside. By vacuuming you will decrease the flea “biomass” (eggs, larvae, and pupae) in your home. Don’t forget the couch cushions as this is a great place for a nest of fleas to be. On hard surfaces, like wood, tile, and linoleum, use a soapy solution (test in small area first to make sure it doesn’t damage your floor). The soapy solution will help kill the eggs and larvae. Fleas like to hang out in carpet, fabric of any kind, cracks, and crevices. Also, you can treat your home environment with a premise spray. Look for one that kills adults and has an IGR (Insect Growth Regulator) to kill the juvenile stages. If you do not want to use insecticides in your home, there are light traps that can be used. Go online and search for light traps. You can buy one or try making one yourself. If your infestation is severe, you may want to consider replacing your carpet or area rugs.
7. Severe infestations require treatment of the outdoor environment as well. First, try to keep your pet away from areas that fleas like to be (shaded areas, moist soil, and around bird feeders). You can also treat the outdoor environment with Cyfluthrin (ex: Bayer Complete Insect Killer) every 7-10 days until the fleas are under control.
8. **The most important thing to remember is don’t allow a flea infestation to happen.** Keep flea prevention on or in your pet at all times. Don’t wait until you see fleas to start treating. By then you could have an overwhelming infestation that can take a lot of time and money to get rid of.

