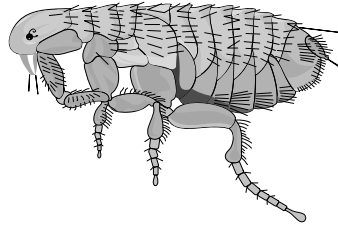


Information Sheet

Fleas



Flea infestation is a very common problem in both dogs and cats. In order to understand the different methods of treatment of fleas and their advantages and disadvantages it is important to know something about the flea's life cycle.

Fleas on your dog or cat are the adult stage of the flea's life cycle - they feed on your dog or cat by sucking blood, so the 'flea dirt' they leave in your animal's coat are digested blood. The adult flea only lives on your animal for a short while but during this time lays hundreds of eggs which drop off your animal and into the environment, in other words your carpet or elsewhere in your house. These eggs hatch into larvae which feed in your carpet or wherever they are, not on the animal, and this stage develops into a pupa. The pupa contains the adult flea within a thin case this is stable for some months but when the pupa receives the right stimulus - usually warmth and vibration, it will hatch within a second and jump onto the animal walking by.

One of the problems with flea treatment is that the larval and pupal stages are so numerous that successful treatment must include a method for controlling them directly, or long term treatment to control the adult fleas they develop into.

Treatment:-

Treatment can take several different forms:-

- 1) Flea sprays, shampoos and powders - These will work but need to be applied frequently and carefully to get a good result, they only control adult fleas..
- 2) Drip ons and spot ons - including Advantage, Frontline Spot on, etc. These all kill adult fleas only, but because they are long acting - lasting one or two months - regular use of these is a very effective form of flea control
- 3) Sprays for the house - e.g. Acclaim, these have a long acting effect to kill larvae and fleas in the house, they are helpful in bad infestations but need to be used in conjunction with a flea treatment for the animal.
- 4) Program. This treatment is given monthly and makes any fleas on your animal sterile, so any eggs they lay will not hatch. This breaks the fleas life cycle and so is a very good way of controlling fleas. However if your animal already has fleas you may need to use an adult flea killer as well. Using Program regularly is a very effective way of preventing a flea problem arising. Program comes as a once a month tablet for dogs or liquid for cats, OR now a new once every 6 months injection for cats.
- 5) Flea collars etc. probably not very effective, depends on the flea going to the collar area.