



Fleas

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If you have a dog or cat that spends much of its time outdoors, flea infestations can be a common occurrence inside the home, especially during the summer months. Flea bites, at the very least, can be an annoyance resulting in an infuriating itch but can also cause serious skin problems on dogs and cats such as allergy dermatitis. There is also the possibility of your pets getting tapeworms from the licking of irritated skin and ingesting adult fleas. Flea bites are also responsible for the transmission of pathogens including viral, bacterial and parasitic diseases.

Biology

The flea passes through 4 stages in its life cycle. It undergoes a complete metamorphosis and each stage in its life cycle can be completed in as little as 2 weeks or take as long as 6 months. Each stage of development is dependent upon the surrounding temperature and humidity. The pre-emerged adult flea can survive for up to 140 days in the cocoon if protected from direct sunlight or desiccation. During this stage the pre-emerged flea is also protected from most insecticides. The pre-emerged flea must emerge from its cocoon before an insecticidal treatment can be effective. Physical pressure and changes in light, temperature, and carbon dioxide are conditions usually associated with the emergence of the adult flea.

Treatment

The goal of any flea control program should be to eliminate the adult and immature fleas inside and outside the home as

well as on your pets. The best approach is to combine environmental, biological, mechanical and chemical methods of treatment and a good place to begin is by getting your pets treated and placed on a preventive flea program from your veterinarian. Next, all carpeted areas must be vacuumed with a power head vacuum cleaner, especially pet bedding and pet sleeping areas. The vacuum bag must then be disposed of immediately to prevent any re-infestation of fleas. Afterwards, all bedding, including pet bedding should be washed. Finally all carpeted areas, baseboards need be treated to kill the adult fleas and to prevent the flea larvae from developing into adults. It's also important to clear away all dead vegetation at pet resting sites outside the home.

To kill adult fleas Adept Pest Solutions uses [EcoSMART](http://www.buyecosmart.com/default.jsp) <http://www.buyecosmart.com/default.jsp> products. These products are Eco-friendly and are composed of organic biodegradable compounds to help maintain a sustainable and healthy environment. In addition, Insect Growth Regulators are used to break the life cycle of the flea by inhibiting its maturation. Insect Growth Regulators do not affect pets or people since the hormones used for the IGR's are insect specific. IGR's can also improve the efficacy of the treatment when used in combination with [EcoSMART](http://www.buyecosmart.com/default.jsp) products.

Outdoors, sprays are very effective and their application should be concentrated in the areas frequented by pets, especially those areas that are shaded, and contain organic matter.

Flea Treatment Preparation

- ✓ Be sure all dogs and cats are treated for fleas by your veterinarian prior to the flea treatment.
- ✓ Expose as much carpeted area and baseboard area as possible by moving furniture away from the walls and picking up items and placing them on tables and beds.
- ✓ Vacuum carpets prior to treatment and dispose of the bag as it will contain fleas and flea eggs.
- ✓ Remove items from closet floors and from under beds.
- ✓ Put all open food and fruit in the refrigerator.
- ✓ Wash all pet bedding and in most cases of heavy infestation, all bedding should be washed.
- ✓ All pets and people must vacate the home during and for 4 hours after the flea treatment.

Adept Pest Solution guarantees all of its flea treatments

Post Flea Treatment

- ✓ The home should be vacuumed everyday for the next two weeks.
- ✓ Fleas will continue to emerge from their cocoon for about 2-3 weeks but should die soon from the residual treatment.
- ✓ You may still be bit by fleas during this period, but emerging adult generally only live a few hours after coming through the residual treatment.
- ✓ Do not shampoo the carpet. Shampooing the carpet will remove the residual effects resulting in a re-treatment, added cost and a void of all flea treatment guarantees.

Natural doesn't always mean safe." Natural" products can be harmful when used inappropriately on pets. For example, d-limonene and linalool are citrus extracts that are used as organic flea control agents. Though they are natural products, they still can have serious side effects if used on sensitive cats or if used improperly".

References:

* Jill A. Richardson, DVM Veterinary Poison Information Specialist
ASPCA/National Animal Poison Control Center Last Updated: 7/21/02

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