



Managing a Flea Infestation

Fighting the flea life cycle is a challenging battle. Most people with flea issues find that fleas seem to come in waves - again and again - making the fight seem impossible to win. It is frustrating, but we are here to help. We agree that it takes a lot of work, but with guidance you can end your flea problem by targeting the life cycle and striking it from multiple angles.

It is time to think like a flea to better understand fleas. By the time you realize you have a flea problem, you are likely six or more weeks into these pests infiltrating your home! In a typical flea population, the adult fleas, which prefer to live on your pet, represent only about 5% of the total flea population. The remaining 95% of the flea population, the eggs, larvae, and pupae, exists in the environment. Depending on temperature and humidity, the completion of the life cycle from egg to larva to pupa to adult flea varies from as short as about two weeks, up to one year. An adult flea can survive for three months to one year, with the females laying up to 50 eggs a day. It is imperative to treat **all pets and their home environment**, (which sometimes includes your car and the outside yard area), to get a flea problem completely under control.

To-do list:

Step 1 – Treat all the pets

Use a monthly flea product to every pet that lives in or enters your home. We recommend Nexgard chewable monthly tablets (for dogs only), or if you prefer a topical treatment or have cats to treat, Frontline Plus or Advantage II. If you do not treat every pet, the flea life cycle will continue. Be sure to use the product according to package instructions. You must treat all pets for several months (usually for three months) to break the life cycle of the flea. Do not discontinue treatment after only one or two treatments. **REPEAT THE TREATMENT MONTHLY**. If you are using Frontline Plus, do not bathe your pet for two days before or after applying the product. Advantage II can be applied immediately after a bath and towel drying. There are no bathing restrictions for Nexgard use.

For a severe infestation, Capstar, an oral pill, will begin killing adult fleas on a pet within an hour of ingestion and continue killing fleas for 24 hours. It is like a “flea-bath-in-a-pill” form.

For dog-only environments, Sentinel, which is a heartworm preventative product, also contains a “birth control for the flea that the dog takes” thus preventing any viable, hatchable eggs being laid by the fleas.

Step 2 – Treat the indoor environment

Fleas can seemingly go anywhere. Their eggs can be on your pets, but most will fall off into your carpets and furniture, and between the cracks in your floor. Once the eggs hatch, the larva live in similar areas until they spin their cocoons, then finally emerge as adult fleas. And then the life cycle repeats. To stop this process, we recommend **Siphotrol Plus Area Treatment** - an aerosol can product with both quick kill and residual activity against fleas -or you can hire a professional residential pest control company.

Before treating, **vacuum** the environment very well, concentrating on the areas where “dust bunnies” go and where your pets spend most of their time. After vacuuming, **empty your vacuum canister or bag immediately** since flea eggs can hatch inside your vacuum cleaner. Be sure to follow package instructions carefully, treating your entire house, even areas your pet does not enter. This might include closets, basement, garage, and bathrooms. We recommend use of a spray product like the Siphotrol Plus Area Treatment, because foggers will get good overall coverage but may not reach under furniture, under cushions, or in the nooks and crannies.

Wash your pet’s bedding and your own bedding in hot water.

Repeat this process in 2-3 weeks, then as needed to fully resolve your situation.

Step 3 – Treat the outdoor environment

It is likely that every time your pet walks outdoors, he or she is picking up new fleas. Fleas are often brought into your yard by wildlife and stray cats – animals that visit your yard when you are not looking. People can actually bring “hitchhiker fleas” into the home on pants legs and shoes. Fleas will enter your house through window screens, cracks, and crevices, like any other bug. Check your local retail store (Lowe’s, Home Depot, Tractor Supply) for **outdoor sprays or granules** to help reduce your pet’s exposure to fleas when they are enjoying the outdoors.