

PUPPY & DOG FLEAS

95% of dog flea infestations are actually caused by cat fleas (*Ctenocephalides felis*).

Fleas on your puppy and in your home can cause intense skin irritation and allergies in your puppy, and bites and allergies in you. Fleas also act as an intermediate host for the tapeworm *Dipylidium Canis*.

The flea lifecycle

Fleas feed on your dog's blood, and can produce 2000 eggs during its lifetime. These eggs fall off your dog and into carpets and floors. When the eggs hatch they develop into larvae and then pupae. Adult fleas emerge from these pupae when conditions are warm enough.

Adult fleas jump blindly in the direction of vibration, carbon dioxide and warmth trying to find a host. Once on you or your dog, they begin to feed and the lifecycle begins again.

Does my dog have fleas?

Fleas can be seen in your dog's fur as small black/ brown insects approximately 2-3 mm long. If you can not see any fleas, even with a flea comb, the wet paper test can demonstrate the presence of flea dirt, and hence flea infestations.

The wet paper test

1. Put white paper towels on the floor under your dog and have your dog sit or lay down.
2. Vigorously scruff up and ruffle the hair on the neck, stomach area and the rump just above the tail.
3. Remove your dog and look for what looks like black pepper.
4. Carefully dampen the paper towel containing the specks. If each black speck becomes surrounded by a red/brown halo, your dog has fleas.
5. This black pepper-like substance is "flea dirt" (which is actually dried blood), left by fleas biting your dog.

Treatment

In warm conditions, the flea lifecycle can complete in as little as three weeks. The traditional flea season was from April to October. However, in modern centrally-heated houses, fleas can reproduce all year round.

It's important to treat all your animals to give the flea no chance to hide in any of its life-stages and to do this you should:

- Treat the fleas on your dog **AND**
- Treat the fleas in the environment

Treating your dog

Many flea products only kill the fleas on your dog for a few hours; after this time your dog can become re-infested as fleas in the environment jump back onto him.

For this reason, we don't recommend the use of many shampoos, sprays and powders available in the shops. Products must have at least a four week duration of action to break the complete three week flea lifecycle – we recommend using:

- Frontline
- Stronghold
- Program/Capstar
- Advocate
- Advantage
- Advantix
- Frontline Combo

Advantage spot on is effective for four weeks, stops fleas biting in three to five minutes and kills 98 – 100% of fleas on your pet within 24 hours. Advantage is shed along with your dog's dead skin cells into your carpet where it also kills developing flea larvae.

Frontline lasts for eight weeks and is absorbed only into the oils of your dog's coat. Frontline kills 98 – 100% of fleas on your pet within 24 hours of application. It is waterproof even with frequent bathing, and is effective against ticks. Frontline Combo also has the added benefit of controlling flea larvae and pupae in the environment.

Stronghold is a spot on that lasts for four weeks, and kills all fleas on your dog. In addition, it also is effective against sarcoptic (fox) mites, ear mites and roundworms. As it kills fleas responsible for spreading tapeworms, Stronghold can be used as a complete deflea/ wormer.

Program tablets effectively sterilise the fleas on your dog and stop them reproducing. For this reason, they are effective in preventing infestation, but are less useful in problem cases. They can be used with Capstar tablets which start to kill fleas within 30 minutes of ingestion. Program is given once a month, the Capstar tablets being used if there is a flea infestation.

Advocate spot on lasts for four weeks, kills 98 – 100% of fleas within 12 hours and stops fleas feeding within 3 -5 minutes. In addition, Advocate kills ear mites, roundworms, sarcoptic mange mites and especially important in dogs travelling abroad on the PETS scheme, it is effective against heartworm

Advantix has the same active ingredient as Advantage, but is combined with another active ingredient to provide triple protection against ticks, fleas, mosquitoes and sand flies- important in dogs travelling abroad on the PETS scheme.

Treating the environment

We recommend Indorex, Staykil and Acclaim for environmental control. Only these products contain sufficient concentrations of their active ingredient to kill larvae in your carpets. In addition, we recommend the physical removal of eggs, larvae and pupae through vacuuming, especially in the areas that your dog lies the most, and laundry of your dog's bedding.