

FLEA CONTROL

There are 2 types of fleas found on domestic pets;

Lost Fleas: occasionally, small, almost black laterally compressed insects are found on the ear or face of a pet. These are usually temporarily caught from close contact with the natural host e.g. Hedgehogs, Birds. Any topical treatment outlined below will remove this infestation.

Dog/ Cat Fleas: The single most common skin parasite of a pet is the cat flea (*Ctenocephalides felis*). It is a brown, laterally compressed, highly mobile insect and is difficult to find in a dark coat. It feeds by biting the host; injecting an anti-clotting agent in its saliva, and sucking the blood. Flea dirt is easier to find; it will always smear red-brown with a wet finger on a sheet of white paper.

FLEAS ARE IMPORTANT: They can cause anaemia in the young, pregnant or old cat or dog. They are often irritant to dogs, and can transmit diseases. They can cause true allergies and hypersensitivity reactions in both pets and owners!

QUICK CONTROL OF A FLEA INFESTATION IS NOT EASY TO ACHIEVE.

An understanding of the **4 stage lifecycle** is essential to appreciate the measures necessary;

- **Eggs** are laid on the pet, but readily fall off to contaminate the environment.
- **Larvae** are present in large numbers off the host and can survive for several months.
- **Pupae** are resistant to most conditions/ treatments and can persist up to one year.
- **Adults** live for only 3-6 weeks once they have found a host, but can live for 6 months off the host.

At any one time 80% of adult fleas are in your house, not on your pet! They lay 25 eggs a day!

All stages develop in the warm, dark, humid conditions found in household furnishings and carpets.

In SPRING/ SUMMER the lifecycle is complete in 2-3 weeks; **NUMBERS RAPIDLY BUILD UP** and fleas spread, live and breed outside to infect other households via their pets.

In AUTUMN/ WINTER the various stages can only develop and breed inside. Your house may contain 99% of the total population of fleas associated with your pet.

CONCLUSIONS:

If there is a significant flea problem it is essential to treat the ENVIRONMENT to get rid of all the population. One should treat the pet with a RESIDUAL ACTION preparation to prevent reinfestation. Avoiding the build-up of pupae in the house using regular TREATMENT/PREVENTION is the key to success.

Pet Treatments.

Powders, Shampoos and Dips are difficult/impossible in cats, and have no residual activity.

Collars often cause local reactions, and are of variable efficacy and duration of action.

Aerosol sprays are only efficient if O-P based and are therefore potentially toxic.

Cats hate them!

Spot-on Products are easy to use – **EFFIPRO** is a generic version of the “gold standard” fipronil containing product Frontline, it is far safer than any O-P product, is cat friendly and lasts for at least a month. We also stock **ADVOCATE** which is also effective and has different advantages and disadvantages to **EFFIPRO** – ask at reception for details.

PROGRAM stops adult fleas from laying viable eggs with an easy monthly oral treatment. An injection, which lasts for 6 months, is available for cats. It takes three months for a large infestation to die off.

Environment Treatments.

Indorex Spray is the most effective, best value aerosol spray, it lasts a year and kills house dust mites.

O-P products e.g. Nuvan Staykill are no longer recommended on safety grounds.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS;

Treatment

EFFIPRO spot-on is 40% cheaper per dose than Frontline. The spray version is the most effective flexible product on the market, but the spot-on works as well and is more convenient.

INDOREX environmental treatment should also be used, to treat the house.

Prevention

PROGRAM is easy to use and is very safe and effective, but it must be used continuously.