

Senlac Veterinary Centre

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Fighting Fleas

How to get rid of a flea infestation

FACT: There are 4 stages in the flea life cycle, eggs, larvae, pupae and the adult flea. Only adult fleas live on your pet, the rest live in your home and garden environment.

- 1) Discuss the best course of **treatment** with your veterinary team and ensure that this is **applied as instructed**. Most products will kill all adult fleas on your pet within 24 hours, some are even faster. Your veterinary team will ensure your pet will be protected with treatment for at least a further 4 weeks which will kill any further fleas that jump onto your pet. Some products will also sterilise female fleas, sterilise eggs and kill the larval stage. This all contributes to breaking the flea life cycle.

FACT: Female fleas can lay up to 50 eggs a day!

- 2) **Vacuum** the home thoroughly, ensuring to move and vacuum under all furniture and in all the nooks and crannies. Do this even if you have wooden or laminate flooring. This will mechanically remove some of the eggs, larvae and pupae in the home environment.

FACT: Flea larvae move away from light.

FACT: Flea larvae can live between cracks in the floorboards.

FACT: Flea pupae can remain dormant for <1year

- 3) **Wash your pets bedding at 60°C** to remove some of the immature stages.
- 4) Thoroughly spray all floor spaces in the home with a **household spray**, even those areas where your pet may not go. Consider all areas where your pet spends time including cars, caravans or dog kennels. Remember to spray under furniture.

FACT: The flea is very difficult to kill while in its pupating stage so although you may have treat correctly for fleas it may take several months to control an infestation.

- 5) **Encourage the pupae to hatch out** into new adult fleas so they can be killed and the life cycle ended. This can be done by giving them warmth, vibration CO2 and humidity in the home. Turn up the heating at home, place wet towels on warm radiators, vacuum regularly.
- 6) Thoroughly vacuum the home 2 days after application of the household spray, including all those hard to reach areas. This will help speed up the removal of eggs, larvae and pupae from the home environment.
- 7) When new adult fleas emerge from the pupae they will jump onto your pet. Even if your pet has been treated these **fleas may been seen on your pet before they die**, this does not mean your flea treatment is not working, it may simply be that your pet has picked up a hitch-hiker flea while out in the garden or on a walk. **Perseverance with treatment is the key.**
- 8) Continue to allow your pet their normal run of the house as any new fleas emerging from pupae will jump onto your treated pet to feed. Generally fleas prefer animals but if your pets are not around the fleas may look for their meal from you.

Key points to remember

- It can take months to rid your home of fleas- a single treatment will not be sufficient.
- Treat all areas in the home and any other area your pet may visit such as cars, and caravans. Fleas can live and breed all year round in the home environment.
- For effective flea prevention you should continue treatment of your pet all year round as advised by your veterinary team. Any breaks in treatment will leave your pet at risk of picking up fleas which will eventually result in infestation of the home environment.
- Some animals have severe allergic reactions to fleas which can lead to skin problems. In most cases these problems can be avoided and resolved by the continuation of treatment against fleas.

Please feel free to talk to one of the team at anytime regarding advice on treatment. Our nurses are always happy to talk to you and demonstrate effective application of treatment. We are also very happy to discuss other preventive health treatments such as regular worming of your pet as this goes hand in hand with treating regularly for fleas.