

# Flea Fact Sheet

## Flea Biology

- Most common flea species infesting dogs and cats is the Cat Flea (*Ctenocephalides felis*).
- Once a female flea jumps on a pet it lays eggs within 24 hours and can lay up to 40 to 50 eggs/day.
- Eggs are laid in the hair coat of the pet.
  - Eggs then roll out of the hair into the premises.
- Fleas typically stay on a host, they do not readily move from pet-to-pet.
  - Fleas seen on people are usually fleas recently emerged from cocoons.
- Pets acquire fleas from an infested premises.
  - Stray dogs and cats, opossums and raccoons are common hosts for the Cat Flea, *C. felis*.
  - As these flea infested animals move through the neighborhood or your yard, flea eggs drop out of their hair. Some of these eggs survive and within three to eight weeks develop into adult fleas.
  - Problems in your home begin when a few of those fleas jump onto your pet and within 24 hours deposit eggs into your home.

## Flea Control Facts

- A flea infestation cannot be eliminated within a few days.
- Once treatment has begun it can take three to eight weeks (occasionally longer) before the flea infestation is eliminated.
  - This is because the home and/or yard are infested with flea eggs, larvae, pupae and adults emerging daily.
  - Remember, the fleas you see on your pet today came from flea eggs laid three to eight weeks ago.

## Flea Control Objectives

- 1. Relieving pet discomfort**
  - Kill fleas on pet(s). Treat all pets in household.
- 2. Eliminate premises infestation**
  - Administration of residual insecticides that kill newly acquired fleas (within 24 hours) before they can initiate reproduction.
  - Administration of insect growth regulators (IGRs) to stop reproduction.
  - Application of insecticides and/or IGRs into the premises in cases of severe infestations or flea allergy.
- 3. Prevention**
  - Year-round flea control program



*C. felis* – female



*C. felis* – male, female and eggs



*C. felis* – feeding



Flea Allergy Dermatitis (FAD)

## Medical Problems Caused by the Cat Flea

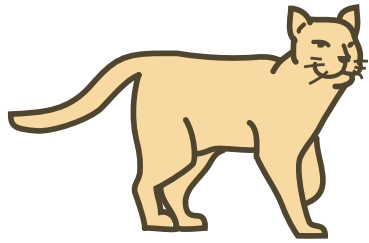
- Annoyance
- Anemia
- Disease Transmission
  - Murine typhus, (*Rickettsia typhi*)
  - Cat Scratch Disease (*Bartonella hensalae*)
- Intermediate host of parasites
  - *Dipetalonema reconditum*, subcutaneous filarid nematode of dogs.
  - *Dipylidium caninum*, the common double-pore tapeworm
- Flea Allergy Dermatitis “FAD” (dermatitis in dogs, cats and people)
  - Fleas inject saliva while feeding which can cause an allergic reaction that often results in severe pruritus (itching) and hair loss.



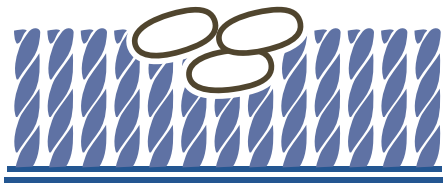
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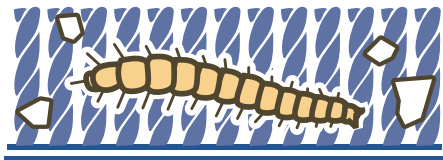
# Flea Life Cycle



Adult fleas on the dog or cat



Eggs (0.5mm) laid on pet and then fall off in pet's environment (ex: carpet)



Larvae live in pet's habitat and feed on flea feces and debris



Pupae within cocoons in the carpet or outdoors

