

FLEA FACTS

Flea Infestations are the most common parasite problem of dogs and cats in our area. It is estimated that American pet owners spend over 500 million dollars each year on flea products most of which do not work! During the past few years much research has centered on studying the life cycle of the species of fleas that attack dogs and cats in an effort to develop better flea control methods. There are over 2000 species of fleas, but only a few actually attack dogs and cats

Here are some facts you should know:

- Flea eggs are white and about the size of a grain of sand. The eggs are laid while the flea is on the pet and easily roll off the fur into the environment. Eggs usually hatch in 1-10 days, depending on the temperature and humidity. Once the eggs hatch, the larvae move deeper into the carpet to get away from light and searching for food. Temperatures below 65° and relative humidity below 70% slow down growth of the flea. When the larva is mature, it produces a silk-like cocoon. Because the cocoon is sticky, it quickly becomes coated with debris from the environment that helps camouflage it.
- This stage can last 9-174 days. Adult fleas emerge from the cocoon when stimulated by heat, vibrations, and exhaled carbon dioxide. The entire life cycle can be completed in as little as 12-14 days, or as long as 140 days. Under average conditions, the entire life cycle takes 3-4 weeks.
- Adult fleas are attracted to house pets by the warmth of <animal> body, movement, and changes in light intensity, and exhaled carbon dioxide. Fleas have tremendously powerful back legs, which they use for jumping on <animal>. It is estimated that if we have power in our legs as has the flea; we could jump over the Empire State Building. It is reported that fleas can jump as high as 13 feet.
- It is now known that the adult flea species that attacks dogs and cats spends its **ENTIRE** Adult Life on <animal>. Once the adult flea begins to feed on <animal>, it must have almost constant access to the blood of <animal> for it to survive. Adult fleas cannot live off <animal> more than 3-4 days without a blood meal.
- Egg production begins within 48 hours of the first blood meal, reaches a peak of 40-50 eggs per day and can last well over 100 days. Female fleas can produce over 2000 eggs during their life. This is equivalent to producing their body weight in eggs every day of their life. While only a fraction of these eggs will eventually develop to adults in the natural environment, this high rate of reproduction ensures that there will **ALWAYS** be fleas!
- New adult fleas must have a blood meal within 2-3 weeks after hatching. The higher the temperature and lower the humidity, the quicker the fleas will die.
- It is common for people to be attacked by fleas after returning from vacation or being away from home for several days. This is often due to the increased temperature that occurs when the air conditioning is turned back providing a better optimum temperature and humidity (in our area) for fleas to mature.

- Fleas consume 15 times their body weight with every blood meal. An infestation of 220 female fleas could consume 10% of a 1-pound kitten's blood volume in one day. The majority of blood consumed is passed out as partially digested feces ("Flea Dirt") that serve as essential food for flea larvae in the carpets and other areas.

FLEA CONTROL MUST INCLUDE TREATMENT OF THE YARD, HOUSE, & PET!

ESSENTIAL STEPS FOR FLEA CONTROL

SPOT TREAT THE YARD:

Treat shady areas, damp areas, dog houses, and other areas where <animal> spends the majority of it's time. Use Our Recommended Residual Sprays for Longer Lasting Effect. Spraying is most effective when the ground is damp. (Keep <animal> out until completely **DRY!**) Repeat Spraying Every 3-4 Weeks. (**DO NOT** use these products on <animal>!!) Dog Houses Should Use Cedar Chips For Bedding & Tack A "No Pest Strip" Underneath The Floor To Aid In Repelling Fleas.

TREAT THE HOUSE:

ULTRACIDE® PRESCRIPTION HOUSE TREATMENT:

Most OTC Foggers are totally worthless. This new prescription product works! We recommend a Professional Exterminator In Severe Cases. Current Laws now prevent the over the counter sale of the most effective flea control products. Use a professional exterminator who will give you a written guarantee to solve the problem. You will find this to be the most cost-effective way to treat the house. Solicit quotes from several exterminators in the area. Be sure to compare guarantees. Get it in writing. **VACUUM** the house **THOROUGHLY**, at least once each week to remove eggs.

BATHE <ANIMAL> EVERY 2 WEEKS IN MYCODEX 3X™, ECTOKYL SHAMPOO™, or DAVIS FLEA SHAMPOO™: These products are safe and can be used as often as necessary to keep <animal> clean and remove fleas. Most over the counter shampoos will dry out the hair coat if used too frequently. A common complaint we hear from clients using over the counter products is "I bathed my pet but now he even scratches more!" That is due to using a shampoo that does not have the proper PH balance.

USE FRONTLINE TOPSPOT™ TOPICAL SOLUTION: This solution is applied to the skin of <animal> every 4 weeks. It is safe for both dogs and cats. The cost of this product is about the same as the cost of a bath--only it's done just once each month. Do Not Bathe <animal> 48 Hours before or 48 Hours AFTER Application of **FRONTLINE TOPSPOT™** Drops.

USE AN OVITROL FLEA EGG COLLAR™: These products inactivate flea eggs so they cannot hatch. The **OVITROL FLEA EGG COLLAR™** is effective for about 6-9 months and is much cheaper than the pills. We strongly recommend **Ovitrol™ Flea Egg Collars** for all pets.

ALL PETS IN THE HOUSEHOLD MUST BE TREATED AT THE SAME TIME.

TO WIN YOUR WAR WITH FLEAS, IT IS IMPORTANT TO TREAT THE YARD, HOUSE, AND <ANIMAL> AT THE SAME TIME USING APPROPRIATE PRODUCTS FOR EACH. DON'T WASTE YOUR MONEY ON OVER-THE-COUNTER PRODUCTS AND "QUICK CURES."