

## FLEAS

### Characteristics

Fleas are small, dark, reddish-brown, wingless, blood-sucking insects that may attack a wide variety of warm-blooded animals including dogs, humans, chickens, rabbits, squirrels, rats and mice. Fleas don't have wings for flying but long legs well adapted for jumping up to 15 cm.

### Infestation

Flea infestations are not always a sign of poor hygiene. It may be that a localised area of poor hygiene, i.e. a pet's bed, could create an infestation. Good hygiene practices however are crucial to the eradication of the infestation.

### Before Treatment

1. Plan to be away for at least **6 to 8 hours** \* after application. This includes most pets\*. Fish tanks should be covered and the filter turned off. Plants are ok.
  - \* Small children 2 & under, pregnant women and people with respiratory or cardiac problems should be out **overnight** according to BC Ministry guidelines. Apply these same guidelines to special-needs pets.
2. Pick up all articles **off the floor**, from under beds and closets such as toys, papers, boxes, shoes, clothing, etc.
3. Cover and put away **all food**.
4. To create the most favourable conditions for the insecticide to work, **clean and vacuum** the entire area of the house paying particular attention to pet areas. Carefully vacuum the edges of carpets and floor/wall junctions as well as around any large heavy items of furniture that cannot be moved. Don't forget to vacuum cushions, beds, both sides of throw rugs and beneath furniture. After vacuuming, seal the vacuum bag in a garbage bag and discard it in an *outdoor* trash container. Use dryer heat on hottest setting for any suspect pieces. Consider disposing of any badly infested items. Washing is optional.
5. **Treat all animals** for fleas. Thankfully, ridding your pet of fleas is a lot easier than it used to be and there is now a large range of 'state of the art' products available which are effective and safe: 'Spot on the back of the neck' preparations, tablets, shampoos, etc.

### Application

A residual quick-drying pesticide is sprayed onto the floor surface area and kills 98%-100% of adult fleas within 12 hours of application which then kills any new fleas within 2 hours of them jumping on the treated surface - well before they have a chance to lay more eggs and thereby breaking the flea's life cycle. See figure of flea cycle on next page.

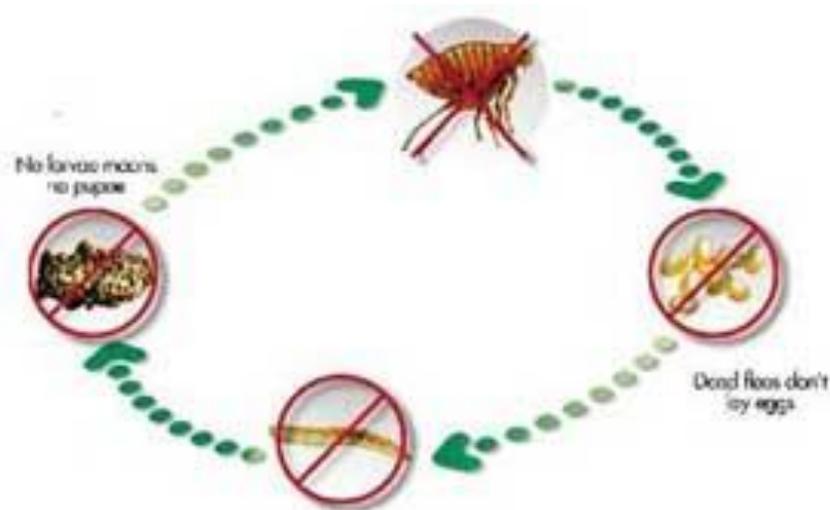
### After Treatment

**Do not** clean or vacuum floors for at least 14 days following the treatment. Then resume only when there has been no flea activity for at least 3 days.

### What to Expect

Flea eggs will hatch at different times and no treatment can affect fleas before they hatch since the cocoons are resistant to insecticides. Expect to see some fleas for 2 weeks or longer following treatment. These "survivors" are newly emerged and will succumb to the insecticide. If adult fleas continue to be seen beyond 4 weeks, do not hesitate to give us a call.

**Flea Cycle:**



In any flea infestation there are four stages of the flea life cycle present: the egg, larva, cocoon, and the adult. While the adult is the most visible stage of the flea development, it accounts for only 1% of a typical infestation. Adult female fleas feed then lay their eggs on a host. Their eggs make up 34% of the infestation; flea eggs fall off the host into carpet and upholstery where they hatch into worm-like larvae after 1-10 days. Larvae make up the majority of a flea population, as much as 57%. After feeding for 5-11 days, they begin to produce a silk like cocoon and enter the pupation stage. New adult fleas usually emerge from the pupal stage in 8 days but it will remain inside its cocoon until it senses the presence of a blood meal to ensure its survival. It may stay protected in this way for up to 1 year.

**1 ADULT FLEA CAN LAY 50-60 EGGS EACH DAY !!!**