



Tips for keeping your pet Flea-Free this season

Fleas: Treatment & Prevention

If your dog or cat is itching and scratching, fleas could be the reason. Fleas can survive year round in Missouri's climate. Flea bites can cause local skin irritation and swelling that may cause your pet discomfort. Some dogs and cats develop an allergic reaction to flea bites, resulting in scratching, which can lead to hair loss or to a bacterial skin infection known as "hot spots." Fleas can also give your pet tapeworms. It is important to treat both your pet and your pet's environment. A flea control program is most effective when you treat your pet, your living areas, and your yard at the same time.

Flea Life Cycle

The female flea can lay up to 2000 eggs in her lifetime. The eggs fall off of the animal, which acts like a "living salt shaker" of flea eggs. The eggs will hatch into *larvae*, *pupate* and *become adults* in the environment. The cycle can take from 3 weeks to over half a year. At any given time, less than 5% of the flea population is adults, so it's important to treat your pet, home and yard for all stages of the flea life cycle.

Signs of Infestation

- Adult fleas on your pet's skin or in your house.
- Flea excrement (dark specks that turn reddish in water), also called "flea dirt," on your pet's skin.
- Irritated skin or excessive itching, which can lead to hair loss or a bacterial skin infection known as "hot spots."
- Flea eggs (white oval shapes the size of table salt crystals) hung up in your pet's coat .

Treating Your Pet

- We will recommend a treatment option tailored to your pet's needs.

Treating Your Pet's Environment

- Treating your house, garage, yard and kennel is another important step in controlling fleas. For best results, treat your living areas and yard on the same day that you treat your pet.
- Regular vacuuming and steam cleaning helps remove flea eggs, larvae, and pupae. Don't forget to dispose of the vacuum bag, as fleas can hatch in the bag after vacuuming.
- A self-directed spray that will kill flea eggs and larvae in addition to adult fleas is the best choice for treating your house, garage, yard and kennel. Example: Knockout ES Spray.
- When treating your yard, a pet-friendly lawn granule application that will kill flea eggs and larvae in addition to adult fleas is best.
- Foggers aren't able to treat underneath objects that fleas love to inhabit, such as couches, so it's best to use a spray to reach under those items.

A Warning for Cat Owners: Use Flea & Tick Products Safely

Flea treatments meant for dogs can be **deadly** if given to cats instead.