

# Fleas

Fleas are important for two reasons; they bite and they can transmit diseases such as plague and murine typhus. There are four types of fleas: cat, dog, human and oriental fleas, which are all basically the same.

Females lay 4-8 eggs after each blood meal, laying some 400-500 during their lifetime. These eggs will just fall off the pet or will fall off when the pet shakes. Frequently eggs, larvae and pupae are found in cracks and crevices where pets frequent, such as among your furniture cushions.

Larvae feed on adult fecal blood. They require high relative humidity. Larvae die at humidity levels below 45% and above 95%. They fail to develop at temperatures below 55F and at or above 95F. The larvae will then spin a cocoon and incorporate surrounding debris on its surface which provides camouflage. It will remain in this stage for up to 20 weeks (5 months), where it is protected from adverse conditions, including pesticides. This is why we use a chemical that carries a residual that will remain for future hatchings. Over the counter flea bombs don't carry a long enough residual.

Adults are stimulated to emerge from the cocoon either by mechanical depression of the cocoon, an increase in temperature and possibly vibrations. Adults seek blood meals on the second after emerging, but can live for several months on stored body fat. Once an adult attaches to a host, it is there to stay unless it becomes dislodged. Although they have a preference in hosts, they readily survive using other species. By the grooming of a pet, 50% of the adult fleas can be removed. For those not removed, the life expectancy of the adult flea can be up to one year.

Fleas are commonly removed from the home by vacuuming and by them attaching themselves to pets lifting them off the carpets. While families are away, those two things are not happening so the population of fleas multiplies at a much faster rate. When the family returns and there are vibrations in the house, the fleas will emerge and you will then have a flea explosion.



Cat Flea



Flea