

ALL ABOUT FLEAS AND YOUR CAT!



How to tell if your cat has fleas

Fleas are very small and are often hard to detect. If your cat has a heavy infestation, you may see fleas on close examination of the coat. The best way to check for fleas is to check for "flea dirt" which are brown/black specks seen in the pet's coat. These are composed of dried specks of blood extracted by the flea. The best way to check for flea dirt is to comb through your cat's coat onto a wet piece of kitchen roll or paper. If the specks turn red/brown, then you know your cat has fleas.

Avoiding flea infestations

Don't wait for your cat to itch or scratch before thinking about flea treatments. Effective and regular flea control will help make sure your cat and your house stay flea free.

Your vet can prescribe effective treatments that, used regularly, will prevent flea infestation.

Buying flea treatments from pet shops, supermarkets and other outlets is not only dangerous for your cat but could indeed be fatal and in most cases is ineffective. Always consult your vet when considering flea treatments for your cat as the type and dosage is dependent on the age and weight of your cat. **NEVER USE FLEA TREATMENTS FOR DOGS ON YOUR CAT- THIS OFTEN PROVES FATAL.**

Flea collars are also ineffective and dangerous and should not be used.

Adult fleas are tiny dark brown, wingless insects which can jump up to 165 times their own length and easily spread by contact from one animal to another. Fleas need to feed on blood from either our pets or ourselves in order to survive and to breed. For young puppies and kittens this blood loss can be distressing and may even be life-threatening. In adult cats (and humans) the main problem is the flea bite, which leads to irritation and skin allergy problems. Fleas can also spread feline infectious anaemia (FIA), a potentially fatal disease in cats.

The flea life cycle begins when the adult flea lays eggs in the coat of the pet. The eggs drop off into the environment and develop through immature larvae and pupal stages to form the next generation of adult fleas.

When it first emerges, the young adult flea immediately begins to search for a host and blood meal. After just one meal of blood the female becomes sexually mature and can start to lay eggs. A single flea can produce over 2,000 eggs in its lifetime!

It's a Jungle out there!

For more information on parasites, this site is a great source www.itsajungle.co.uk/