



The *Feline* Hospital

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Flea handout

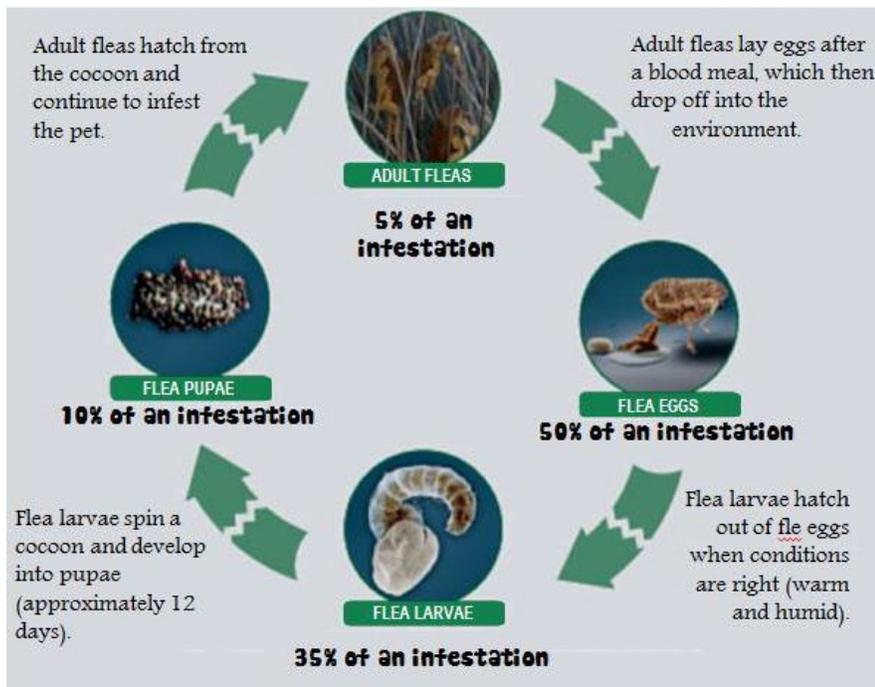
If you think just killing the adult fleas on your pet means he or she is protected from further flea infestation, think again! It is very important to periodically check your cat for fleas. The best way to do this is with a flea comb. Comb your cat carefully then tap the comb on a white paper towel. If your cat has fleas, you are likely to see what we call flea dirt. Flea dirt looks a lot like large pepper granules and is actually excretion from the flea. If you find that there is flea dirt on your cat, a thorough combing is a first good step.

You will want to have a glass of warm soapy water handy. Place any fur or droppings from your flea comb into the glass of soapy water to kill any fleas or larvae the comb pulls off. The next step would be to apply a flea treatment.

Even after a good combing, flea eggs, pupae, and larvae could still be lurking on your pet and in his/her surroundings, waiting to reach adulthood and start your furry friend scratching.

The flea life cycle is similar to the butterfly life cycle. Before a flea reaches adulthood, they've gone through three previous life stages: egg, larva, and pupa. Depending on environmental conditions, it can take between two weeks and six months for flea eggs to reach adulthood, although the average is three to four weeks in most homes. While you may think the fleas are dead today, in as little as two weeks your pet could be re-infested with hungry adult fleas.

Advantage kills fleas at all stages of life



Advantage breaks the flea life cycle at multiple stages. One treatment with Advantage kills fleas within 12 hours, before they have time to lay their eggs. Additionally, fleas, flea eggs & flea larvae in the cat's environment are killed following contact with an Advantage treated pet (they do not need to bite to die). Re-infesting fleas (e.g. newly hatched fleas jumping back on the cat) are killed within 2 hours. A single application of Advantage is waterproof and keeps your pet protected for one month.

How Advantage Works

One of Advantage's active ingredients, imidacloprid, acts on the nervous system of the flea to cause paralysis and subsequent death. The other active ingredient pyriproxyfen, is an insect growth regulator (IGR). In combination with imidacloprid, the IGR kills all flea life stages on the treated cat and its surroundings. It also prevents fleas from infesting your home. IGRs act like a growth hormone which affects the egg and larva of the flea making them unable to change into the adult stage of development. Prevented from maturing, fleas are virtually unable to reproduce.

Everyone knows fleas are *not* fun. However here are some flea facts that will amaze you!

Flea fossils date back to the Lower Cretaceous period, meaning fleas have been around for about 100 million years. At that time, fleas may have infested a Tyrannosaurus Rex or Triceratops

Fleas can jump up to 150 times their own length.

To put that into perspective, if a human competed in the Olympic long jump with that ability, that athlete would certainly win the gold medal with a gravity-defying 1,000 foot long jump. They can easily jump onto your pet from

On average, a flea's lifespan is two to three months. However, pre-emerged fleas (those not living on a pet) can survive undisturbed and without a blood meal for more than 100 days.

The female flea can lay 2,000 eggs in her lifetime. That means that if all 53 million dogs in the United States each hosted a population of 60 fleas, the U.S. would house more than six trillion flea eggs. Laid end-to-end, those eggs would stretch around the world more than 76 times! It's important to kill fleas before they get a chance to lay eggs.

The female flea consumes 15 times her own body weight in blood daily.

The largest recorded flea is the North American *Hystrihopsylla schefferi*. Found in beavers, it can measure 12mm in length - almost 1/2".

A flea can bite 400 times a day. That's a rate of 4,000 bites a day if your pet has just 10 fleas.

Fleas in the environment

The first step in getting rid of fleas from rugs and carpets is to use your vacuum cleaner daily. Removing *larvae* from rugs and carpets is not easy. The vacuum easily picks up eggs and adult fleas, but the larvae cling to the carpet and don't come out easily. You will therefore want to use an area treatment.

When using an area treatment, start by vacuuming thoroughly the center of the room including furniture. Next, move all the furniture into the center and vacuum periphery. Put furniture back and vacuum center of the room. You will need to treat the furniture as well. Remember to spray *under* any cushions. Lift and vacuum cushions then apply treatment.

When using the area treatment you may treat one room at a time. Treat a room, close the door and place a towel at the door base to seal the room. After an hour open the windows for a few minutes to air things out. Once a room has been treated you may want to cover some areas with a sheet to watch for flea dirt. Be sure to machine wash any rugs in hot, soapy water to remove fleas. Pet bedding also needs to be washed or replaced with new ones.