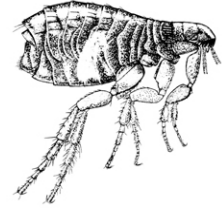


Flea Control



Flea control can be very frustrating and at times somewhat discouraging. In order to effectively eliminate a flea problem, a step-wise program needs to be implemented. The three steps to effective flea management are treatment of infested pets, vacuuming and cleaning of infested premises and spraying or dusting infested premises.

Since most flea problems originate from an infested cat or dog, elimination of fleas from the pets is the first and most important step. Insecticides approved for direct application to pets as spot treatments, dips, dusts, sprays, or shampoos are available at most discount stores. In addition, most veterinarians will also provide flea control services for your pet.

Once the pet has been treated, efforts should then focus on the indoor premises. Particular attention should be paid to areas of the home where the pet sleeps or spends the majority of its time. Blankets or rugs that may be used as pet bedding should be discarded or laundered in hot, soapy water. All carpeted areas and upholstered furniture should be thoroughly vacuumed and the sweeper bag contents discarded.

If the flea infestation is light, frequent and thorough vacuuming may eventually eliminate the problem. Moderate to heavy infestations, however, will usually necessitate the application of a residual insecticide to carpets, baseboards, cracks and crevices, and other areas where fleas may be present. Good results have been achieved using products that contain a contact insecticide along with an insect growth regulator. Spray treatment can be performed by a professional pest control operator if the homeowner so desires.

Sanitation - Before vacuuming, collect all items (toys, shoes, clothes, etc.) off the floor, under beds, furniture, in closets, etc., to ensure best access for treatment. Also cover fish tanks, remove bird cages, pet food and water dishes and wash or dry clean any pet bedding. Vacuuming carpet with a beater-bar type vacuum where the pet rests and sleeps will help control flea larvae by removing eggs and dried blood feces (larval food) plus opening up the carpet's nap for more effective insecticide treatment. Vacuuming must be performed on a regular basis every other day to be effective. Flea larvae do not move far from the site of hatching when there is adequate food (dried blood feces from adults). Vacuum especially where lint and pet hairs accumulate along baseboards, around carpet edges, on ventilators, around heat registers, in floor cracks, and under and in furniture where the pet sleeps.

After vacuuming, place the vacuum bag in a large plastic garbage bag and discard in an outdoor trash container. If the cleaner uses a liquid water medium in a plastic pan (rather than a dust bag) discard dirty water far away from the house.

Outdoor Control - Fleas do not survive well in sunny locations. Flea populations can become very numerous in shaded and protected areas such as sheltered animal enclosures, crawl spaces where pets may sleep, or vegetated areas adjacent to buildings. To treat the outdoors, pyrethroids may be sprayed in dry shaded areas which the animal frequents, as well as insect growth regulators which are the most effective outdoor treatments. Since larvae prefer shaded, dry areas, spraying the entire yard is wasteful and irresponsible. If possible, control access of feral animals, such as skunks and

opossums, to your yard as they bring new fleas with them. For outdoor areas which are difficult to treat (i.e. under decks), pet access should be restricted. Outdoor treatment is primarily used in severe cases of flea infestation and may not be necessary if fleas are controlled on the pet and in the home. There are literally hundreds of products on the market for flea control on pets and the premises. For successful flea control, infested pets and the premises need to be treated at the same time.

Before application, read and follow the insecticide label and safety precautions -

People and pets should be out of the house when treatments are made, and not return until the treated spray surfaces have dried. Depending on the carpet and type of treatment, it may take several hours (usually three to four hours to give the insecticide a better chance to work). To assist in drying, open windows and use a fan or air conditioner.

Usually, the licensed professional pest control operator has the experience, training, equipment and most effective insecticides for overall flea control.

How to Handle a Flea Emergency

If your home is heavily infested with fleas, take these steps to control the situation:

Inside the Home

Locate heavily infested areas and concentrate efforts on these areas.

1. Wash throw rugs and the pet's bedding.
2. Vacuum upholstered furniture. Remove and vacuum under cushions and in cracks and crevices of furniture.
3. Vacuum carpets, especially beneath furniture and in areas frequented by pets. Use a hand sprayer to treat all carpets with an insecticide that contains an insect growth regulator.
4. Allow carpet to dry and vacuum a second time to remove additional fleas that were induced to emerge.
5. Continue to vacuum for 10 days to 2 weeks to kill adult fleas that continue to emerge from pupal cocoons.

On the Pet

Use a spot-on treatment, which can be purchased in pet stores or from vets, or a systemic oral treatment, which is available from vets only.

Outside the Home

1. Sprays are only necessary outdoors if you detect lots of fleas.
2. Locate and remove debris in heavily infested areas, especially where pets rest. Concentrate treatment in these areas with a spray containing a residual insecticide and the insect growth regulator. Open areas to sunlight by removing low hanging branches.



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