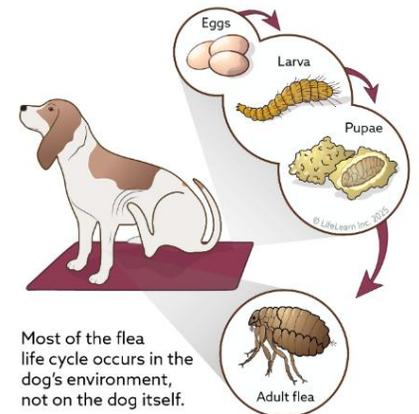


How can my pet get fleas?

Fleas can spread directly from a flea-infested animal to your dog or cat, but usually dogs and cats get fleas from their environment. Fleas live, feed, and mate on many animals, including cats, dogs, rabbits, ferrets, opossums, rodents, and raccoons. Flea eggs fall off these animals, into the environment, where they hatch into larvae. The larvae eat organic debris until they mature into pupae (the stage within a cocoon). The pupae may lie dormant for weeks to months, awaiting the ideal environmental conditions before hatching into adults.



Newly hatched adult fleas jump onto a host animal to complete their life cycle. Within two days of eating a blood meal from the host and mating, the female flea begins to lay eggs, which then drop off into the environment, and the cycle starts again, spreading fleas to more animals. Under ideal conditions, the flea can complete its entire life cycle in as little as two weeks; in adverse conditions, the cycle can take as much as a year.

Homes with carpets and central heating provide ideal conditions for the year-round growth of fleas. The highest numbers of flea eggs, larvae, and pupae are found in areas of the house where pets spend the most time, such as their beds and furniture. Even if fleas are in your house, you probably will not see them. The eggs are tiny, white specks the size of dust particles, while the larvae are somewhat larger, with dark heads and lighter bodies. They migrate deep down into carpets, furniture, or cracks in floors, away from the light.

How do fleas affect my dog?

Many dogs are sensitive to flea bites, causing excessive scratching, hair loss, and scabbing, especially at the base of the tail. This reaction can cause secondary skin infections. You may notice small bits of black material within the haircoat. Fleas can carry several diseases, including plague, and one of the most common tapeworms known to infect dogs and cats). Any dog with fleas is likely to also have a tapeworm infestation.

How do fleas affect my cat?

Many cats live with fleas but show minimal signs. However, some cats are allergic to flea bites, and they will groom or scratch excessively after being bitten, often developing skin infections. Hair loss and scabbing may appear, often at the base of the tail, but it can occur all over the body. Your veterinarian may recommend flea control even when no fleas are found, since fleas are the most common reason for itching and skin infection, and the evidence is often groomed off by your cat. Any cat with fleas is likely to also have a tapeworm infestation.

Step 1: Treat your pets. (all of them)

Many flea-control products are available, such as oral and topical preparations. Over-the-counter products may have limited effectiveness. Flea shampoos and powders kill fleas on your pet at the time of application, but they have little lasting effect, so your dog may have fleas again the next day. There are very effective products designed to be administered once per month or once every three months. Ask our team about **Bravecto** and **Simparica** products, including Simparica Trio, which prevents heartworms as well as fleas & ticks.

Step 2: Treat the Environment Inside

Many products are available to kill the adult and larval stages of fleas and stop the flea life cycle, such as:

- Adulticide sprays for use in the house
- Sprays containing IGRs for use in the house
- Insecticides applied by professional pest control companies

Sprays should be used in places where the flea eggs, larvae, and pupae are likely to be. Treat the entire household first and then concentrate on the hot spots — your dog's favorite napping spots, such as soft furniture, beds, and carpets. Once larvae hatch from the egg, they move away from the light and burrow deep into carpets and into other nooks and crannies where they are difficult to reach. Be sure to move cushions, furniture, and beds to spray under them. Larvae are also likely to live in baseboards and the cracks and crevices between floor seams or floorboards.

Flea eggs and pupae are extremely tough and resistant to insecticides. To remove eggs, as well as dead fleas, **wash your pet's bedding in hot water or replace it. Regular and thorough vacuuming of your carpets, floors, and soft furnishings can remove many flea eggs, larvae, and pupae.** You will need to throw away the vacuum bag to prevent eggs and larvae from developing inside the vacuum cleaner. It is helpful to vacuum before using a spray for the house because the vibrations will encourage newly developed fleas to emerge from pupae and be killed by the insecticide.

Step 3: Treat the Environment- Outside

Flea exposure is inevitable when your pet goes outside especially if you have animals like raccoons, opossums, or neighborhood cats. Spraying your yard with a product containing an IGR and repeating every 14–21 days for three to five applications can significantly help control fleas and ticks. Concentrate on dark, shaded areas. It's important to note, however, that these sprays may have a negative effect on other insect populations outdoors. Many pest control companies or hardware centers offer outdoor treatments for fleas and ticks.

I noticed my pet had fleas after his return from boarding. Did he get fleas there?

Not necessarily. Pre-adult fleas (pupae) can survive for many months in their protective cocoons. When you or your pets are absent from home for extended periods of time, these pupae remain in cocoons because no host is available. As soon as you or your pet return home, adult fleas emerge in large numbers and jump onto cats, dogs, and even people in the search for a blood meal. Vibrations (from walking) and/or increased carbon dioxide (from breathing) trigger fleas to emerge from their cocoons.

Why does my pet still have fleas after treating him and the environment?

The apparent failure of treatment is almost always due to improper application of the preventive, inadequate treatment of the home, or exposure to other infested pets or environments. It is important to continue to administer flea control to all pets in the house for 3–6 months following an infestation to allow time for remaining flea life stages to develop into adults and then be killed when they jump on your pet. Most of these problems can be overcome by using a veterinarian-recommended flea preventive product on your pet in addition to treating your home and yard.