



East Suburban Animal Hospital

724-325-3220

Flea Infestation and Treatment Recommendations 2017

Flea infestation is an extremely common problem in pets. Fleas make the pet uncomfortable, cause allergic reactions and can spread diseases such as Bartonellosis (Cat Scratch Fever), Feline Infectious Anemia, Tapeworms, and the Plague. On young animals, fleas can suck enough blood to cause death from blood loss.

Fleas prefer to feed on pets, but if the flea population is too large, the fleas will bite humans. The bites cause small red spots on the legs and body.

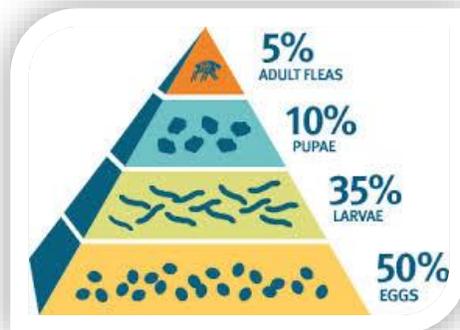
"My pet does not have fleas!"

Flea survival depends on being inconspicuous, sometimes pet owners do not even realize their pets have fleas before it is too late and the pet is infested.

Why are fleas so hard to eliminate??

The flea life cycle makes eliminating them difficult. Flea larvae and pupae (cocoons) are not sensitive to most insecticides. Therefore, when the adult insecticide wears off, new fleas may appear from the emerging eggs, larvae, and cocoons. This is why using a preventative every month is necessary.

If you are seeing adult fleas, they are just the tip of the iceberg! Adult fleas account for only 5% of the flea population.



The best, most effective way to eliminate a flea infestation, is to never have one to begin with. The use of a monthly flea preventative is key. If your pet is not protected with a monthly preventative, a flea infestation is highly likely.

If your pet and the surrounding environment is already infested it may take several months to eliminate them completely because of the different life cycles of the flea. Using a monthly preventative is key to proper elimination.

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**1 Female flea can make up to 300 eggs in just 3 weeks. Three weeks later you could have 90,000 fleas!!!**



## Flea Prevention and Treatment Options



There are many different treatment options available on the market today, so many so that the choices can be somewhat overwhelming. We can help you choose the correct preventative for your pet. At ESAH we carry topicals, collars, and oral flea prevention. Each one is effective, but all may have certain limitations.

There are many flea preventatives sold in stores, many of the products for dogs contain Permethrin. This is not as effective and does not last as long as Advantage or Frontline Plus.

**Most Permethrins are extremely TOXIC to cats!**

All effective flea products are potentially toxic. If your pet is ill, pregnant, less than 8 weeks old, or is to undergo surgery, check with us before using them. Call us if at any time you are uncertain about what to do.

The Veterinarians at East Suburban Animal Hospital recommend the following products based on the specific needs of your pet and family lifestyle:

- Frontline Plus- Topical used monthly. Kills Fleas, flea larvae, and ticks.
- Advantage- Topical used monthly: Kills Fleas, flea larvae. Does not kill Ticks.
- K9 Advantix- Kills Fleas, flea larvae, ticks, and repels mosquitoes. It is TOXIC to CATS.
- Nexgard- Oral Tablet- (DOGS Only) Kills fleas and ticks.
- Revolution- Kills fleas, mites, some ticks, and prevents Heartworms. For Cats, it also kills intestinal parasites and earmites.
- Sentinel- A monthly oral pill that sterilizes fleas (keeps them from reproducing) but does not kill adult fleas. It is also a Heartworm preventative and Intestinal parasite dewormer.
- Seresto Collar- A collar that kills adult fleas and ticks. It lasts for 8 months.

There are many other products on the market, speak to us if you feel that the options we carry are not right for your pet and we may be able to make another recommendation.

*We do not recommend Flea Shampoos, sprays, foams, powders, dips, rinses, and roll-ons.*

*Most Flea Collars are not effective.*

***Dr. Dryden, also known as Dr. Flea because of his intensive study of fleas, feels all dogs and cats should be on an adulticide and larvicide flea treatment year round. In Western Pennsylvania, at a minimum the treatments should be started in May and continued through November. Once the heater is on in the house all day and night, the humidity in most homes gets so low that the fleas die and flea control is not needed. If you have an effective humidifier or a humid house, you need flea control year round. Fleas could still be present even though pet may never leave the house!***

## Treating the home and environment

*If Home and Environment treatment is necessary, ideally a professional Exterminator should be consulted. If that is not possible, see below:*

*The majority of the time, only one of the products listed below is needed. Monthly treatment will avoid having to do any of the below procedures to control fleas.*

1. House cleaning. Try to think of where your pet spends the most time. The eggs fall off in that area. Clean those areas thoroughly. Larvae are attracted to warm, dark, moist areas. Eggs will be mostly where the pet rests.
2. Clean, wash, and mop human and animal bedding, under beds, baseboards, corners, floor cracks, closets, under and behind furniture and cushions, refrigerators, dishwashers, washers and dryers, rafters or where pets may rest.
3. Vacuum or preferably steam clean all carpets. Put a mothball in the vacuum bag to kill the vacuumed fleas. Do not put mothballs where animals can get to them, as they are toxic. The vibrations of the vacuuming cause the pupae to become adults and therefore more sensitive to the insecticide. This may prevent the surge of newly hatched fleas that sometimes occurs about three days after spraying.
4. Hand spraying and fogging are tedious, potentially toxic to you and not very effective. If the fleas are severe and you want immediate flea control, use a spray such as Knock out that kills immature stages of fleas because that is the form that lives off the pet and these chemicals are safer. Be sure to do previously cleaned areas and the underside of box spring mattresses, cracks of waterbeds, basement rafters, behind laundry utilities, etc. Foggers that kill adult fleas are not needed because the adults live only on the pet. Adulticide sprays are also much more toxic to people and pets.
  - a. Use one fogger canister per room for coverage of broad areas. A long lasting spray that kills immature fleas such as Knock Out is best for getting immature stages. Follow directions on containers.
5. Mow the yard and clean leaves, grass, and other hiding areas, as immature fleas can find protection in these areas after dropping off of wildlife.
6. Apply and outdoor insecticide for immature flea stages to all areas frequented by pets and wildlife such as under porches, decks, shrubs, and on the grass and in/under doghouses.
7. Treat ALL animals with the flea product(s) of your choice at proper intervals. If a pet leaves your home and then returns, treat it before it reenters the houses.
8. If the fleas are not controlled after 15 and 30 days, repeat the entire cleaning and spraying.
9. The fleas should now be under control. Re-infestation can occur from wildlife, stray pets, or taking your pet into another area. Monthly treatment of all of your pets should be all you need to prevent re-infestation. Causes for Fleas can be difficult to determine, a professional exterminator could be consulted.

***READ AND FOLLOW DIRECTIONS ON ALL INSECTICIDES. IMPROPER USE COULD CAUSE SERIOUS HARM TO ANIMALS AND HUMANS AND IS AGAINST THE LAW.***

**Some likely causes of failure to control fleas:**

- Infested areas have not been treated
- Inadequate application of insecticide
- Failure to do follow up application
- Animals travel outside of the treated area and bring back fleas
- **Some pets in area were not treated**
- Obstructed areas treated with only a fogger
- Inadequate Cleaning