

# Vale Pest Control

## Flea Treatment Advice

### Fleas

Most people will be familiar with adult fleas which are small, flattened, dark brown insects. They cannot fly, but can jump great distances. There are many species of flea, of which the human flea is very rare these days.

Most infestations we deal with are of the Cat Flea *Ctenocephalides Felis* (approx. 70%) or the Dog Flea *Ctenocephalides Canis*.

Adult fleas are parasites which suck blood from their 'host'. They live in the fur of the host, and in and around the places where the animal sleeps. A cats bedding area can house up to 8000 pre-adult and 2000 adult fleas.

Adult fleas lay small oval white eggs (approx. 0.5mm in size) which usually fall off the host into their bedding, or into carpets.

After about a week these hatch into larvae. The larvae (approx. 5mm in size) are like tiny white legless caterpillars covered in bristles which feed on the droppings of the adult fleas.

After two or three weeks the larvae spin a cocoon out of silk and then moult into a pupae. The pupae do not feed, but wait for a suitable moment to emerge as adults. This can be within a few days or not for many months, dependent upon being triggered by suitable stimuli such as vibration or heat.

As adults they will rest in any areas that are quiet lying in wait for a host to appear, jumping onto it to feed feed.

### Where do fleas come from?

A pet is the usual source of infestation, having picked up fleas which have hopped off another animal; this can occur even if the pet has been treated. Each adult female flea can lay between 4 and 8 eggs after each blood feed, laying up to 1000 eggs in her 2 year life span.

Sometimes infestations occur in houses or offices where there are no pets. In these cases the fleas are usually brought in by a person, normally on their clothes, after they have been near an infested place.

Sometimes fleas suddenly emerge after waiting as pupae for months. This occasionally happens when someone enters a house or room that has been shut up for a long period.

### How to prevent an infestation?

If you have a pet it is vital that some form of flea control is regularly used, such as a flea collar, powder or spray. Your vet will give you advice on this.

Spraying affected rooms alone will not cure the problem.

Regular vacuuming of carpets and the places where pets sleep will do a great deal to prevent problems.

### What do we use to spray with?

We use an insecticide containing an adulticide to kill the adult fleas and break the life cycle of the fleas as well as an IGR (insect growth regulator) to prevent the new hatchlings from reaching maturity.

We usually spray all carpets throughout the house, or just the affected areas if the full treatment is not necessary. Spraying will kill any larvae and adults around at the time of treatment within approximately 48 hours. The insecticide remains

active for several weeks, so if any eggs hatch or pupae emerge, these too will soon be exposed to the insecticide and die.

**If you have treated your pet and you see a flea within a few days after we have sprayed, it is likely to have only just emerged and should die soon. We request that you do not call us back unless you still have a serious infestation after three or four weeks, in which case you will be entitled to a free treatment.**

### **What should I do before the house is sprayed?**

Ensure that your pet has been treated in accordance with Veterinary instructions. Clean and vacuum the entire area of the house where pets have access, paying attention to where they sleep and regularly lie (these are the fleas' breeding grounds).

Thoroughly vacuum the edges of carpets and floor/wall junctions and the piping on the furniture.

Carefully vacuum around any large heavy items of furniture that cannot be moved.

The dust etc. that has been collected should either be burnt or disposed off in an outside bin.

Some customers place a flea collar in the vacuum bag to help kill off the fleas.

Wash the pets bedding (regular washing will reduce the number of fleas).

As far as possible, clear the floor and please remove any toys or other objects that children have regular contact with in preparation for the insecticidal spray.

Remove any delicate pets such as birds, hamsters, tropical fish etc,

- Check and treat your pets with an appropriate flea spray or powder using the product as directed by a vet.
- The infested area should be thoroughly cleaned using a vacuum cleaner, paying particular attention to carpet or floor edges.
- Pet bedding and upholstery should be thoroughly vacuumed and where possible washed. Washing should be done preferably at a temperature of 50°C or more, but more importantly in accordance with the care labels.
- The infested areas should then be treated with an insecticide spray formulated for fleas.

### **What should I do after the house is sprayed?**

The insecticide is applied in a solution with water, which will mean the surface of the carpet may be slightly damp to the touch after spraying.

As far as possible, open windows and doors to ventilate treated rooms.

Do not wash floors for about four days or more after spraying and leave the vacuuming of carpets for 10 days or more where possible, then clean as normal.

**Keep children and pets away from treated areas, particularly carpets, until surfaces are dry.**

The insecticide will kill only adult fleas, it does not kill flea eggs, so be aware that you can expect to see fleas for up to 10 days following treatment due to the lifecycle of the insects. These fleas will not be able to reproduce as a result of the Insect Growth Hormone in the treatment spray.