

## Helping you fight fleas

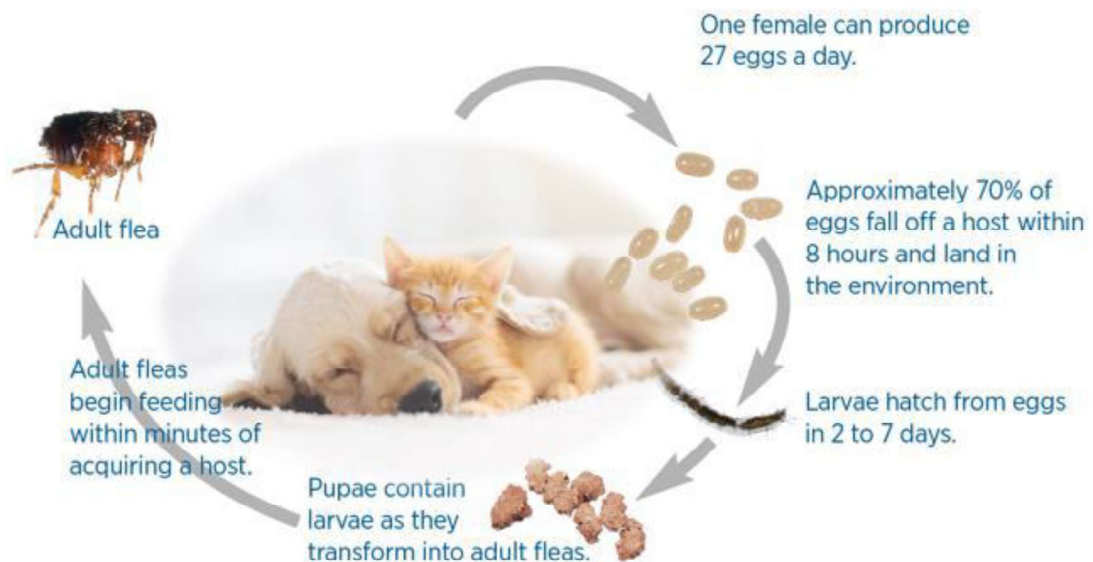
Tackling a flea infestation can be a worrying and frustrating process. Fortunately, today we have great solutions that can prevent and successfully eliminate fleas without the need for fumigations, powders, sprays or collars!

But first, here is some useful information to help you understand these pesky parasites.

### How do fleas live?

Once they have jumped onto a pet, adult fleas will typically spend their lifetime on that individual where they are feeding, breeding and producing eggs. The eggs are not sticky and roll off the pet into the house wherever the pet spends their time.

After 2-7 days, the eggs hatch into larvae. These larvae don't like the light or the dry air and will crawl for up to a metre seeking shelter and humidity within soft furnishings, cracks in hardwood floors or underneath baseboards. After some time, the larvae will form a cocoon (pupae) within their hiding place. The cocoons produce new adult fleas when triggered to hatch by vibrations, changes in light, and carbon dioxide that jump onto a nearby animal or person. If the cocoons do not sense the presence of a nearby potential host, they can remain dormant for up to 1 year! While adult fleas on a pet are the most visible part of a flea infestation, it is important to remember that we must eliminate all the life stages including the adult fleas, eggs, larvae as well as the cocoons to successfully eliminate an infestation.



### How do we eliminate the adult fleas, larvae, eggs and cocoons?

Treat all pets in the home with an approved medication as directed by your veterinarian. After treating your pets, medications such as Revolution® Plus, Simparica® and Simparica Trio® will kill existing fleas within 12-24hrs. Those products will kill adults before they can lay new eggs in your environment, reduce flea feeding, and improve flea allergic dermatitis.

However, we now need to kill the newly hatching fleas as well. This is where pets can do the hard work for us! Allow your protected pets free access to all rooms of the house. Their job is to be “flea magnets” running around all their usual favourite places, triggering cocoons to hatch and picking up newly emerging fleas so that they can be killed by the medication. These new fleas will not produce viable eggs and will not contribute to an ongoing infestation if all pets are protected.

If you have other furry animals, such as hamsters, ferrets or rabbits, discuss flea treatment options for these pets with your veterinarian. It takes 3-5 weeks on average for the pupae in the pet's immediate environment to hatch. **Therefore, resolution of existing infestations, even under perfect circumstances, can take 2 months or more.**

### How can I know if the medication is working if I'm seeing fleas on my pets?

New fleas can be visible when they jump onto your pet just before they get killed. Do not worry, if you are following the treatment recommendations, these new fleas will not contribute to the infestation. This can happen if fleas are hatching within the home (if treating an existing infestation) or from hatched cocoons outside (since wildlife carry fleas too). For reassurance that everything is working well, place a white towel or blanket onto pet bedding before your pet goes to bed in the evening. By the next morning fleas that were visible on the pet should be found dead on the blanket. The ‘white blanket test’ will reassure us that the product is working as expected.

### How much cleaning should I do?

Rigorous daily cleaning is not necessary and will not eliminate environmental stages of fleas alone. Vacuuming once or twice per week can help though, since the vacuum will produce vibrations helping cocoons to hatch into fleas that are ready to jump onto a treated pet. Focus on low traffic areas where cocoons might be hiding and where pets can't reach. These might include behind doors and underneath furniture. Pet bedding can be washed and placed in the dryer.

### Can my pet get re-infested?

Pets with fleas acquired them either from other animals or infested environments where other animals were. Even strictly indoor pets can get infestation. For those reasons, monthly re-administration of Revolution Plus, Simparica or Simparica Trio ensures that newly acquired fleas are killed fast and that no viable flea eggs are produced by these fleas. The pets are now protected from future infestations. We also recommend to determine who is responsible for giving the next dose of medication and create a monthly schedule by either using the reminder stickers on a calendar, or by signing up to receive a reminder notification at [www.mypetreminder.ca](http://www.mypetreminder.ca).

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### Who can help me if I am not seeing any improvement?

Your veterinary team are the experts and their expertise can help to solve difficult problems. To prepare to have this discussion with your animal health expert, you can use the below checklist as a guide to capture the key information in solving the problem:

- Are live fleas currently seen on my pet(s)? How many? Are you able to catch them?
- Is flea dirt seen on my pet(s)? (small black/brown specks like pepper seen when you part the fur, commonly found on the back near the tail)
- When were fleas first noticed on this pet?
- List all other pets in the household:
- For each pet, list what flea product is currently being used on that pet and dates of use:
- Did the pet get a bath within 2 hours after the application of a topical product or have you noticed any vomiting following oral administration of medication?
- Describe any problems with fleas in the last few years. How were these flea problems resolved?
- What opportunities exist for each of these pets to encounter wildlife or areas where wildlife travels?
- What opportunities exist for each of these pets to meet other pets? e.g. Visiting with other pets, groomer, park, classes etc.
- What opportunities exist for each pet to visit an environment where other pets frequent? e.g. Shared courtyard, neighbour's yard
- What restrictions are there on the pets' movement throughout the house e.g. Are there restrictions to specific rooms or furniture?
- Are there any ongoing or underlying skin conditions in this pet? Please describe
- What kind of improvement has been noticed so far? (For example: observation of dead fleas on white bedding or reduction in itchiness and skin problems)

