

UNWELCOME GUESTS!

They are tiny and jump increasable heights and lengths to get to where they want to be. One second they are there and the next they are gone, leaving behind an itchy red welt.

Fleas are wingless insects that are agile, usually dark in colour and their legs are long with the hind pair well adapted for jumping. The flea body is hard, polished, and covered with many hairs and short spines directed backward, which assist its movements on the host. The tough body is able to withstand great pressure but it is possible to eliminate them by rolling a flea briskly between the fingers to disable it then crushing it between the fingernails. Fleas can also be drowned in water and may not survive direct contact with anti-flea products.

Fleas are known as external parasites. They have tube-like mouth-parts adapted to feeding on the blood of their hosts which usually consists of dogs, cats, rats, rabbits, mice, squirrels, foxes, chickens and humans. Some people and animals suffer allergic reactions to flea saliva resulting in rashes. Flea bites generally result in the formation of a slightly raised, swollen itching spot with a single puncture point at the centre (similar to a mosquito bite). The bites often appear in clusters or lines of two bites, and can remain itchy and inflamed for up to several weeks afterwards. Fleas can also lead to hair loss as a result of frequent scratching and biting by the animal, and can cause anemia in extreme cases. Besides the problems posed by the creature itself, fleas can also act as a vector for disease. Fleas transmit a variety of viral and bacterial diseases to humans and other animals. Fleas also spread tapeworm from one animal to another.



Flea populations are evenly distributed, with about 50% eggs, 35% larvae, 10% pupae, and 5% adults. Their total life cycle can be as short as one year, but may be several years in ideal conditions. Female fleas can lay 5000 or more eggs over their life, allowing for phenomenal growth rates.

CONTACT DETAILS

After-Hours Clinic: 021 91 911 91

Bellville:

1 Kontiki Road
Glen Ive
021 91 911 91

Durbanville:

16 Plein Street
021 976 3015

Sonstraal:

10 Verdi Boulevard
Sonstraal Heights
021 975 1870

Kenridge:

78 De Bron Avenue
021 914 0886

Goodwood:

107 Vasco Boulevard
021 591 2571

Parow:

20 Frans Conradie Dr
021 939 7102

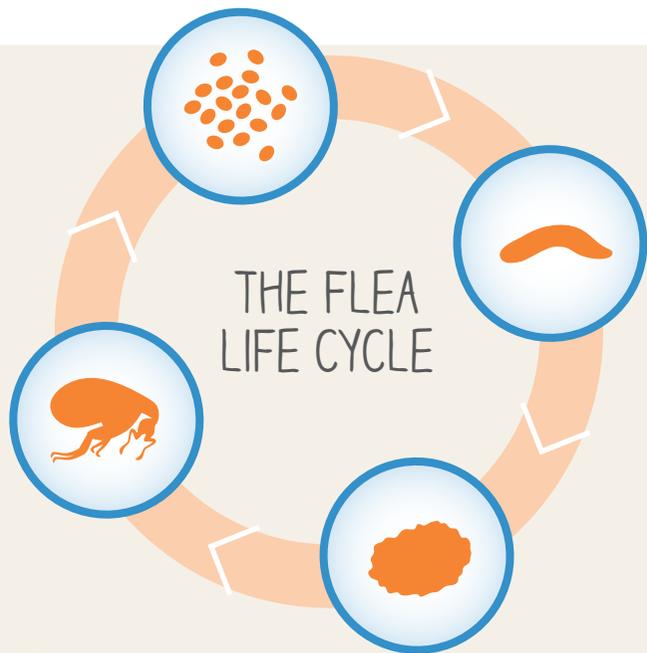
*Visit any one of our six branches.
Make use of our after-hours emergency facilities
at 1 Kontiki Road, Bellville or visit our
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DEALING WITH UNWELCOME GUESTS:
FLEAS!



1. Egg

Fleas lay tiny white oval-shaped eggs. Eggs are laid in batches of up to 20 or so, usually on the host itself, which means that the eggs can easily roll onto the hosts resting and sleeping areas. The eggs take around two days to two weeks to hatch.

2. Larva

The larva is small, pale, has bristles covering its worm-like body, lacks eyes, and has mouthparts adapted to chewing. Flea larvae emerge from the eggs to feed on any available organic material such as dead insects and vegetable matter. They are blind and avoid sunlight, keeping to dark places like sand, cracks and bedding.

3. Pupa

In the pupa phase, the larva is enclosed in a silken, debris-covered cocoon. Given an adequate supply of food, larvae should pupate and weave a silken cocoon within 1–2 weeks after 3 larval stages.

4. Flea

The adult flea's diet consists solely of fresh blood. Adult fleas must feed on blood before they can become capable of reproduction. Adult fleas may remain resting in the cocoon period until they receive a signal that a host is near - vibrations (including sound), heat, and carbon dioxide are all stimuli indicating the probable presence of a host. Fleas are also known to hibernate over winter in the larval or pupae stages.

STEPS TO BREAK THE CYCLE

IT IS IMPORTANT TO TREAT ALL OF YOUR PETS AND YOUR HOUSE ON THE SAME DAY. THIS IS THE ONLY WAY YOU WILL GET TOTAL FLEA CONTROL.

Step 1: Vacuum

Vacuum your entire house paying particular attention to corners, dark crevices, under furniture, under beds, pet beds, rugs and especially around skirting boards. The vibration from vacuuming also stimulates the fleas to emerge from their cocoons and thus they will be exposed to the insecticide that will be used. When you have finished vacuuming, dispose of the contents of your vacuum cleaner completely.

You will be removing eggs, larva and pupa from your house thus completing step one.

Step 2: Spray insecticides

When choosing an insecticide read the label. Look for the ingredient IGR (Insect Growth Regulator is Birth Control for Fleas. This protein works on the developing flea eggs and larvae and stops fleas from developing to maturity so they cannot lay eggs.) Spray all carpets, rugs, floors, soft furnishings and places where your pet sleeps.

Vacuuming is very important pre insecticide spraying but not post spraying. Do not vacuum for at least two weeks after spraying, as the IGR component will have a residual effect.

Remember to remove all fish, reptiles and other living creatures from the room. This treatment may kill them.

Don't forget about your yard and garden, there is no need to purchase special yard spray as you can use the same spray that you used in your house. Spray around where the pet sleeps, in crevices, gravel and sandy areas. Areas of the yard which are in sunlight should be OK as the larvae tend to avoid bright places.

Next wash all of your pets bedding and soft toys. Shake them well and hang them in the sunlight to dry.

Step 3: Treat your pets

The latest treatments are spot on pipets that contain product in liquid form, which are much safer for both pets and humans. These are applied to the skin, usually between the shoulder blades and disperse through the skin's oils.

Chewable Tablets for Killing Fleas on Dogs rapidly kills fleas and then goes on to prevent flea infestations for a further month. Most tablets are not recommended for use on cats.

Speak to your TAH veterinarian about the best products available to help you with the above steps in stopping the flea cycle!

