

Lake Animal Hospital

You have fleas, now what? We hear this all the time. Here is a little bit about fleas, followed by our recommended treatment needed to help you get them under control in your house and on your pets.

Fleas aren't a problem that you can ignore and seeing even one flea on your pet should alarm you, because there are undoubtedly many, many more and they aren't going away if your pets or you provide an easy source of food for them ie: blood. We have seen adult cats die because they have uncontrolled fleas in such large numbers, they have sucked out all of their blood!

First and MOST IMPORTANTLY, EVERY ANIMAL THAT LIVES and / or COMES INTO THE HOUSE NEEDS TO BE ON A VET RECOMMENDED FLEA PREVENTATIVE. There are cheaper brands that may or may not work, but if they aren't working, because of the chemicals involved, you will have to wait possibly 3 weeks to put on a GOOD, proven product all the while the fleas are multiplying. **Please don't waste your money on unproven products when that cost could go toward some of the best products there are.** You can't just treat the one or two animals you may have seen fleas on. It doesn't even matter if some of the animals in the house are never let outside, are never let together and are kept in different rooms, to a hungry, just hatched flea anything is fair game. They like to feed on animals instead of us because animals have a naturally higher body temperature, but they will bite humans.

Some dogs & cats get "flea bite dermatitis" This is an allergy to flea saliva. These are the pets you will notice itching and scratching. If you look closely, you will most likely see red bumps on their tummy, flanks and elsewhere. Some animals start pulling or licking the hair off above their tails or on their tummies, scratching hair off around their neck.. A good way to find fleas is to look at the animal's tummy, part the hair, you have to be quick, fleas move fast! You may or may not find any running fleas, but may see what looks like tiny particles of crumbled dirt (you can look for this all over the body) This is most likely "flea dirt" or fecal secretions of dried blood from the fleas feeding off of your pet. You can tell if it is "flea dirt" as opposed to real dirt by shaking some of those crumbles onto a wet paper towel, fold and press the crumbles and if they take on a reddish-brown color, you have flea dirt.

Cats are very good flea killers, and if your cat doesn't have "flea-bite dermatitis" and isn't scratching it can be really hard to notice them. You should be diligent in checking that cat periodically, especially if you don't have flea preventative on.

It is a misconception that pets that never go outside can't get fleas. We see surprised people almost weekly. Eggs and fleas can come in on you and anyone or anything (a visiting adult or child's coat or a kid's book-bag for instance) that comes into your house. I would like to say here, we **HIGHLY RECOMMEND** keeping your animals and your house protected. Animals can be expensive to own, but from what we know at Lake Animal Hospital, it is so much cheaper to prevent fleas than it is to end up treating your whole house AND having to get all of your animals on prevention. If they are on preventative and you or someone brings in fleas or eggs, when they bite the treated animals, they die. Over and done with that problem :o)

You still see fleas? If you have a QUALITY flea preventative on your pet, you may still see fleas on it. The flea preventative IS working, this just indicates that you have a "biomass" in your house.

*******"BIOMASS= is the amount of living matter in a given habitat, expressed either as the weight of organisms per unit area or as the volume of organisms per unit volume of habitat." *******

It is impossible to tell how long your unprotected pets had fleas before you noticed them. All this while the fleas were feeding and breeding on your pet. Everywhere the pet went, flea eggs are rolling off of them like a salt & pepper shaker held upside down. This could mean you have quite a problem. It just won't go away without treatment. The eggs don't hatch on linoleum or hardwood, but on carpet, bedding, couches and anywhere the pet goes. For this reason, you will never kill all the fleas in your house by giving your pet's flea baths. Baths just really give a new clean eating area for the new fleas that are hatching in the carpet and climbing on to feed. Flea collars don't work either. We find fleas hiding under flea collars. They are no protection or prevention. Flea bombs have been proven not to be the best approach either. Sprays go straight up and settle down on your couch, table tops & top of beds, but they don't get under the tables, end tables or beds where the cats and dogs have probably been.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FLEA CONTROL ARE AS FOLLOWS

1. **Put a QUALITY FLEA PREVENTATIVE on ALL of your pets every month for 3 to 4 months.** If you can't afford it year 'round like we HIGHLY recommend, it will take you approximately 3 to 4 months to get ahead of the fleas you have now. If you keep product on your pet, and it picks up a flea outside, it will die after it feeds. So it breaks the cycle and there are no eggs laid.

2. **WASH & DRY EVERYTHING washable that the pet has been on, in the hottest water allowed by the object, When dry, put into clean garbage bags to store while you treat the rest of the house. This includes dog beds, and all blankets on the couches and bedding on all the beds in the house the dog or cat has been on.**

3. **VACUUM your beds, all carpets etc** If you have a bagged or bagless vacuum, we recommend spraying a line of **MYCODEX ENVIROMENTAL SPRAY** on the carpet and vacuum over it to get some into the canister to kill any fleas that lived through the suction. Get rid of the bag or the debris immediately after vacuuming.

4. After doing a color-fast test on your furniture, COVER YOUR FISH TANK WITH PLASTIC OR TINFOIL. And REMOVING all your pets including birds TO A SAFE LOCATION, **use Mycodex Enviromental Spray**, by lightly spraying all carpet, couches, bedding etc. It doesn't have to be wet, just lightly misted *****WE RECOMMEND LEAVING THE HOUSE FOR AN HOUR****

5. Repeat the whole house treatment in 2 weeks. Nothing can kill the cocoon stage and some of them will be hatching.

6. **KEEP PREVENTATIVE ON ALL PETS.** Vacuum frequently and get rid of debris by throwing in a trash bag sprayed with a bug killer and sealed tightly and removed from the house.
