# Flea Control

*Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff*

A cat that has fleas will, of course, scratch a lot. And even if you cannot see the fleas you can find flea dirt, which consists of reddish brown specks on the back of the cat between the shoulders. Cats cannot clean easily in that area and therefore fleas can bite undisturbed.

**Why you must treat fleas in your pet's environment**

Here is a common scenario: You think you have eliminated all of the fleas from your house, but suddenly they're back. Remember that you may not have done anything wrong. What has most likely happened is that the juvenile forms of the flea, such as the pupae, which have a cocoon to protect them from most insecticides, may have hatched.

You must treat the environment, inside and out, until there are no fleas remaining. Outside, wild animals may serve as carriers for flea populations. Interestingly enough, the common cat flea can infest over 50 animals around the globe, and some of them are probably in your neighborhood, whether you live in an urban or a rural area. In the U.S., coyotes, raccoons, rodents, skunks, rabbits, squirrels, ferrets, and the neighbor's dog may all carry fleas.

**Outside Removal**

Outdoor elimination involves treating the yard and kennel areas where fleas are most likely to occur. Fleas tend to thrive where it's moist, warm, shady, and where there is organic debris. Be sure to concentrate your efforts on patios and under porches, as well as inside and around doghouses.

Rake away leaves, straw, and grass clippings to disturb the flea habitat as well as to allow flea removal products to work. Remember to read all labels carefully and apply them as directed.

**Inside Removal**

Indoors, which protects the fleas from the elements, all stages of fleas must be removed. This includes killing adults and ensuring that juvenile forms can no longer develop.

One easy way to remove up to 50% of all flea life stages is simply to vacuum regularly and thoroughly - and don't forget to enclose the bag in a plastic bag and discard it from your home!

Wash your pet's bedding weekly and don't forget to treat anywhere your pet spends time - including your car, pet carriers, garages and basements.

We recommend the use of products that contain both adulticide and insect growth regulators (IGRs) such as Nylar to stop every life stage of the flea. Foggers and



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Carpet Powder easily get into areas like baseboards, moldings, cracks, and under furniture. These contain both insecticides and IGRs, and are not appropriate for use on pets.

Flea & Tick Sprays containing the adulticide pyrethrin may be used on pets or in the pet's environment.

Remember to read all labels carefully and remove children and all pets - including fish - when you fog or spray.

To keep fleas from returning to your pet, we recommend a monthly topical product applied to your pet such as, Advantage II.



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