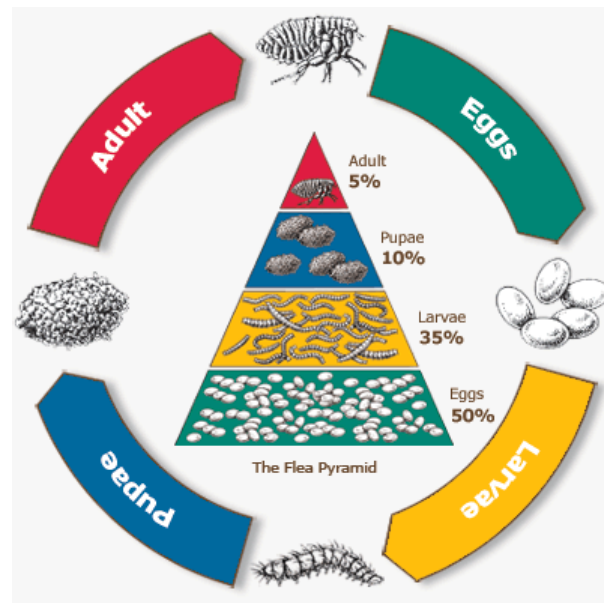


Flea Infestations and Flea Allergy Dermatitis (FAD)

Flea Life Cycle. To best treat fleas, we must first understand their lifecycle. The adults are the only part of the life cycle that lives on your cat and dog. These adults then lay eggs and fall to the ground (in the house, on the furniture/bed, outside in the yard, etc). The eggs hatch into larvae, which scurry away to warm dark places (under the furniture, behind TV, etc). The larvae turn into pupae, which finally emerge as adult fleas. The adults only make up 5% of the total flea population with the remaining 95% of the population being in your house and yard. It can take anywhere from 2-3 months for a flea to complete its lifecycle. Fleas will infest all pets in the household as soon as one day whether you see them or not.



Flea Allergy Dermatitis (FAD). As the name implies, FAD is an allergy triggered in response to the flea's saliva. Not all pets are allergic to fleas, however. Signs associated with FAD are extreme itchiness, hair loss, pinpoint scabby lesions (miliary dermatitis), scratch marks and skin infections. The most severely affected areas are typically the lower back. Clearing the flea infestation will resolve the skin allergies (unless your pet has a concurrent food or environmental allergy).

Treating the problem.

1. The TRIAD of flea treatment is the quickest, most effective way to get rid of the flea problem: TOPICAL ADULTICIDE (VECTRA) + ORAL OVACIDE (SENTINEL) + HOUSE TREATMENT (SIPHOTROL or EXTERMINATOR).
2. **Topical flea medication.** Topical flea medications (ie Vectra, etc) are generally the mainstay of treatment and have proven very effective in flea treatment and prevention. We recommend applying these medications once a

month. They are an adulticide and work by killing the adult fleas as they come in contact with the product.

- a. These medications must be applied directly to the skin. It is very important to part the fur to apply it properly.
 - b. Do not give a bath to your pet two days before or after you apply the medication.
 - c. If your pet is a frequent swimmer, talk to your veterinarian about an oral flea medication. Another alternative is to apply the topical medication every 2-3 weeks.
 - d. All in contact pets must be treated, including indoor only cats, rabbits, ferrets, etc.
 - e. We recommend using Vectra or Frontline for dogs. For cats, we recommend Revolution or Frontline.
3. Treating flea eggs. Sentinel and Program are ovacidal medications that contain prevent the eggs from hatching. **Combining this medication with a topical flea product provides the best results in flea control.**
 4. Oral flea adulticides. Capstar is a great medication to kill the adult fleas. It starts working within 30 minutes, but only lasts for 24 hours. Capstar is great to use while you are waiting for your other flea medications to take effect. Trifexis is another monthly flea adulticide combined with heartworm prevention; however, we do not carry this product.
 5. Products NOT recommended:
 - a. We do not feel that Hartz, Seargents, Biospot, etc, are effective means of flea control. They can have severe, life threatening side effects in cats as well.
 - b. Flea collars and flea dips are NOT effective means of flea control or flea prevention.
 6. Treating the house. Treating the house is very important in controlling the problem targeting those areas under the furniture. **Vacuuming and sweeping** the floors on a daily basis really helps to remove the eggs, larvae and pupae. Be sure to **launder** the pet's bed, towels, etc. We generally recommend treating the house with a veterinarian approved spray, such as **Siphotrol**, because it is easier to direct the spray in the areas of interest. 'Foggers' and 'bombs' may not be effective because they shoot their contents in the air, not necessarily getting under the areas where the fleas will be. You may also hire **exterminators** to help with the problem.
 7. Other medications. Depending on how itchy your pet is, steroids and anti-histamines may be prescribed to help them feel more comfortable. Antibiotics may be needed for secondary skin infections.

Tips for Success.

- 1) You must treat every pet in the household.
- 2) Be sure to apply the topical medication directly to the skin.
- 3) Please be aware that we will not get rid of the flea problem in just 1 month. It can take several months to completely be rid of the flea infestation.
- 4) The TRIAD of flea treatment (topical, oral and house treatments) provides the quickest, most effective way to get rid of the fleas.
- 5) Continue the topical flea medication on a monthly basis to prevent future flea infestations and outbreaks of flea allergies.

Always feel free to call your veterinarian if you have any questions or concerns.

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