



GROOMING



Fleas: Irritating, blood sucking little critters!

Fleas = Eeeeewww!!! Did you know that fleas use your dog or cat as a mobile restaurant (they are blood dependent!) and even worse, as a brothel and birthing room in the cosy confines of your pet's fur? All the yucky black and brown speckles in your pet's coat are their droppings, eggs and larvae. (I bet you are itching yourself now just thinking about those facts!!!) They are also Olympic insect champions and can jump 150 times their own length (300m in human terms!) So it is very easy for them to transit between hosts and their environment.



The first signs of fleas on your pet will probably be that annoying scratching and licking especially around the base of the tail at 3am in the morning. On closer inspection you may find adult fleas and the 'speckles' in their coat. Time for action!!



If the conditions are warm and humid, fleas will breed prolifically (up to 50 eggs a day) and what you can see on your dog represents only 5% of the flea population found in your carpets, furniture, bedding and garden! The baby fleas begin feeding on the blood of their host minutes from emerging from their cocoon and breed within 36 hours of their first meal. It only takes one little bite to set up an allergic reaction and possibly secondary complications such as hot spots. And there goes your budget for the month on the vet bills!!

Don't be fooled, flea infestation is not just a summer problem as our heated houses in winter also provide perfect breeding conditions.

Fleas are the number one cause of skin disease in pets and also have the ability to transmit tapeworm, as flea larvae can consume tapeworm eggs if present amongst the other debris they munch on!

It is therefore a good idea to follow the "prevention is better than cure" rule and regularly treat your pets with a monthly 'spot on' application or in tablet form. These products not only terminate the life of the adult fleas but also stop the breeding cycle that can last up to 6mths on your pet and in the environment. NB: products such as collars, powders and shampoos/rinses only kill the adult fleas present at the time of use!

Severe infestations may require a more stringent management programme that includes flea bombing the house, machine washing pet bedding and deep vacuuming.

So, in a nut shell, before you even see any signs of fleas invest in a good flea control product and use as directed. You will then have a happy and content pet without any itches!!

