

# Fleas



Cat and dog fleas are usually found together and are very similar in appearance. These fleas are small, wingless insects about 3mm long with piercing sucking mouthparts. They are dark coloured and have very narrow bodies with well-developed legs which make them good jumpers. Their bodies are covered with backward projecting spines that help them move between the hairs on the host animal. The female cat flea's head is twice as long as it is wide. Both cat and dog fleas have a row of very heavy spines on the front of the head (genal comb) and the back part of the first body segment (pronotal comb).

Cat and dog flea larvae are 6mm long when fully developed and look much like fly maggots. They have 13 body segments, are a dirty-white colour with backward projecting hairs on each body segment. They also have a pair of hook-like appendages on the last abdominal segment.

Cat and dog fleas go through complete metamorphosis. The females lay four to eight eggs after each blood meal. The eggs fall into the nest of the host animal or wherever the animal happens to be at that time. The eggs hatch in about 10 days. The larvae feed on dried blood, bits of faeces, and other types of food materials. When mature they spin silken cocoons within which they pupate. The pupal stage lasts from seven days up to a year. The adult cat flea will often stay within the cocoon until vibrations stimulate them to emerge. The adult fleas feed on blood with their piercing sucking mouthparts. Cat and dog fleas prefer these two animals, but will readily feed on man.

## Treatment

South Gloucestershire Council Pest Control Services offers a professional service for the treatment of fleas at competitive rates.

The form of treatment is likely to be an insecticide spray.

### Immediately prior to treatment residents must:-

- Vacuum floors, furniture, including cracks and crevices, especially where pets are likely to have been and throw away the bag;
- Remove equipment, toys etc from the floor, and disconnect electrical equipment;

- Ensure that adults who suffer from asthma, animals and children are not in the property at the time of treatment. Fish tanks need to be covered and the pump turned off.
- Treat any cats and dogs for fleas and wash their bedding in hot water or destroy bedding;
- Ensure that foodstuffs and sensitive materials are put away.

You will be advised on safety regarding the treatment and left an information sheet with emergency information.

### Disclaimer

The treatment will involve spraying affected areas with a water based insecticide. In some cases as a consequence of the treatment, temporary or permanent staining or marking of sprayed surfaces can occur. Whilst every care is taken to minimise the likelihood of this happening, treatment is undertaken at the customers own risk. Any concerns should be discussed with the Pest Officer prior to the treatment commencing.

### After Treatment

- Ensure the following:
- Ensure children wash hands after touching treated surfaces;
- Do not vacuum until 10/14 days after treatment;
- Keep children, pets, and asthma sufferers out of the treated rooms until the treatment is dry (normally a few hours).

**For Pest Control treatment: 01454 868001**

**Free Internet access is available at all South Gloucestershire libraries**

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