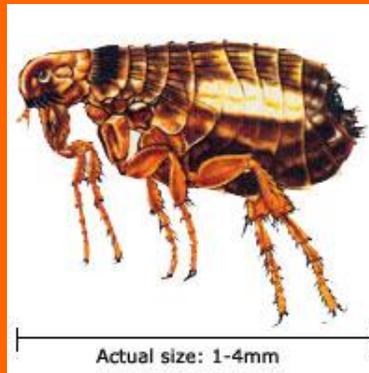


## Fleas



### **Fleas**

Adult fleas are normally 1-4mm long, brownish in colour, without wings but with powerful legs adapted for jumping, and piercing, sucking mouthparts. Their bodies are covered with backward projecting spines that help them move between the hairs on the host animal. Cat and dog fleas are usually found together and are similar in appearance. Female fleas can live up to two years, during which time they can lay up to 1000 eggs each. 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 on the back part of the first body segment (pronotal comb). Cat and dog flea larvae are  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch 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. Fleas are not thought to transmit any serious illness to humans. Although not all people are affected by flea bites, they can cause severe irritation.

Adult fleas live exclusively as parasites of warm-blooded animals. The females lay their eggs close to or on the infested animal. Wall - to - wall carpeting and soft furnishings also provide a relatively undisturbed environment for fleas to develop. They can also live in cracks and crevices in bare floors.

Larvae feed on debris and adult flea droppings. Adult fleas feed solely on blood with their piercing and sucking mouthparts. Cat and dog fleas prefer feeding on cats and dogs, but also feed on humans. 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.

### **How can I get rid of fleas?**

The pest contractor will usually spray the carpet with a residual insecticide. Note: these areas must not be vacuumed or washed for at least 10 days after the treatment, or longer if possible. It is recommended that prior to a treatment you should vacuum all carpets. Regular cleaning, particularly with a vacuum cleaner, will help prevent the build-up of an infestation by removing eggs and larvae from floors, furniture and where pets sleep. Also; In order to achieve effective control, pets must be treated with a product approved for veterinary use.

The standard treatment for infested premises is the application of a residual insecticide, either as a powder or a liquid spray. The insecticide is applied to all floor surfaces.

**Local directories, or the 'Yellow Pages', contain details for pest contractors, under 'Pest Control'. A list of Local Pest Contractors is also held on the web page on which you found this fact sheet.**

