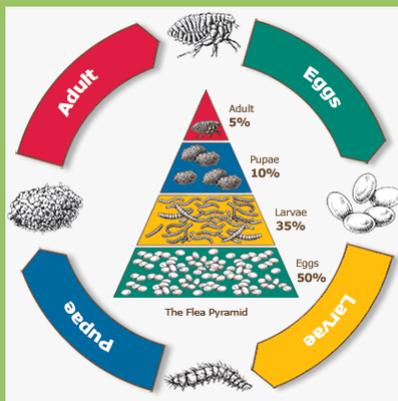
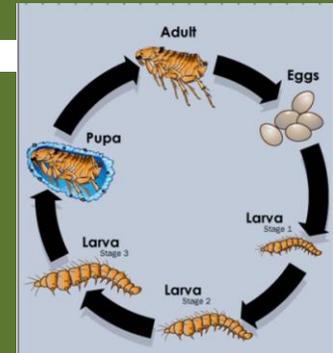




Lake Side Animal Hospital Newsletter

Fleas, Fleas, Fleas

The blood-sucking parasite



Learn about the enemy

The flea is a blood-sucking parasite that makes a pet's life miserable, and people itch just at the thought of them. Pet owners often ask what flea treatment, be it a drop, a dip, a collar, a spray or a shampoo works best to get rid of the pesky, persistent parasites. The answer is: No single method or product will completely eradicate a flea problem. The flea life cycle is actually fairly complex and understanding the various stages will help to get rid of them.

Fleas are insects that have an exoskeleton, no wings, simple eyes, six legs and piercing, sucking mouthparts. The most common, problematic flea is *Ctenocephalides felix* (the cat flea) and infests cats, dogs, humans, other small mammals and birds. Fleas are active and reproduce year-round (contrary to popular belief), but thrive in warm, moist environments. Fleas are metamorphic, meaning they undergo a marked change of form and structure as they grow from egg to adult. There are four main stages in the flea life cycle: egg, larva, pupa and adult.

In addition to fleas biting pets, they can also cause other medical problems. The saliva of fleas can be irritating and an allergenic to our pets, causing itching, scratching, chewing and other signs seen with *Flea Allergy Dermatitis (FAD)*. One flea bite can cause an allergic reaction in sensitive animals for up to 2 weeks, regardless of whether the flea is still present on the pet or not. *Tapeworms* are an internal parasite of both dogs and cats, which require the flea as the intermediate host. This means that fleas can carry tapeworms. Your pet

can become infected by accidentally swallowing fleas while grooming or chewing themselves. *Anemia (decreased number of red blood cells)* can occur secondary to heavy flea infestations due to numerous blood meals being taken (more common in puppies and kittens or small dogs and cats).

Adult Flea



The adult flea prefers to live on animals and their diet consists of blood meals. Once a blood meal is taken from the host (your pet), the adults must feed every 4-6 hours. The female flea mates after feeding and begins to produce eggs within a couple of days. The average number of eggs laid per day is 30-45 eggs, but can reach up to 50 eggs in one day. The eggs drop off the pet onto bedding, carpets, flooring or soil. The adult flea can jump an average of 9-15 inches.

Treatments for fleas: The number of individual treatments needed depends on the degree of infestation and thoroughness of each treatment. Both the pet and the home environment should be treated simultaneously to successfully control flea populations at all stages of their life cycle.

Thanks to flea control products available today, flea management is easier and more effective than ever before. Products such as **Frontline, Advantix and Revolution** can all be used topically on your pets. We can help you determine which choice might be best for your pet.

If you are having a flea problem please contact us for any help or advice you may need. Please try not to use over the counter topical flea/tick medications on your pets they could have an adverse reaction.

Sincerely,
Becky Fletcher(Public Contact)
Lake Side Animal Hospital

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