



Breaking the flea cycle

Struggling to keep your pet flea free? Don't worry you're not the only one. It is no secret that year-round, effective flea treatment (pet and environment) is essential to a flea free pet but it can often be easy to forget a flea treatment or just treat the one itchy dog resulting in ineffective control of the flea cycle.

Pets can pick up fleas from other pets, animals such as wildlife or from the environment. Flea eggs and pupae can remain dormant for 6-12 months until the environmental conditions are favorable for them to hatch. The juvenile fleas then jump onto the pet ravenous for a tasty blood meal.

Most animals scratch or become irritated especially around the base of their tail or backs of their legs. If you part the hair in these areas, you can usually visualize either adult fleas or "flea dirt" which looks like small black specks of dirt. Flea dirt is actually flea feces composed of digested blood. As well as causing your pet stress and discomfort, resulting in numerous skin conditions, they also carry tapeworm eggs that pass this parasite onto your dog. Tapeworms can also potentially be transmitted to humans, which is all the more reason to ensure your dog is flea free.

So, if you see the odd flea, it's not a big deal? Wrong! 10 adult fleas can multiply to more than 250 000 fleas in only 30 days. The adult fleas you seen on your pet are actually only 5% of the population. The remaining other 95% of the population (eggs, larvae and pupae) are hiding out in the garden, under the house, in bedding, in the carpet or on furniture getting ready to infect your pet.

To effectively control fleas, ALL members of the pet family (mostly cats and dogs) must be treated with an effective flea control product. With so many products on the market (spot Ons, topical sprays, oral tablets, oral chews and shampoos/conditioners) it's easy to see how pet owners can become confused. As a rule, avoid supermarket brands and opt for reputable retailers such as pet stores, produce stores and vet clinics. Remember that not all products safe to use on dogs are as equally safe to use on cats. All pets and pet owners are different so what may work for one household may have little success in another. Nanango Veterinary Surgery veterinary and nursing team are fully trained in flea management and can assist you in choosing the best product for your individual pet/s and answer any questions that you may be itching for an answer over.