

## **FLEAS-INFORMATION SHEET**

Fleas have become an increasing problem in domestic premises because of the trend to allow pets to reside indoors and a tendency for their bedding to be neglected during cleaning. Additionally wall to wall carpeting, large items of furniture and central heating can provide a relatively undisturbed warm environment for flea larvae to develop.

There are various species of fleas including hedgehog, rabbit, bird, rat and human fleas but by far the most prevalent are cat and dog fleas which are roughly the same size 2-3 mm long. They are dark in colour and extremely flat when viewed from the side, they have powerful hind legs for jumping and feed as adults by biting warm-blooded mammals including man. They can be a transmitter of disease but this is extremely rare in the UK but they are still objectionable because of the bites they inflict. These bites are generally a tiny dark red spot surrounded by an irritating reddened area, some persons however have little or no reaction.

The eggs are laid in the fur or feathers of the host, the larvae hatch in about 1 week and live in dark, humid conditions such as animal bedding and feed organic debris. A single cat's can support a flea population of many hundreds of larvae adults. The larvae form a pupae after 3 weeks and they can survive all winter in this condition. The emergence of the adults is often stimulated by the vibrations of a passing host animal. This accounts for the occasional mass attacks which take place on entry to deserted premises.

### **Treatment**

It is essential that any flea treatment is thorough and the occupier has a very important part to play. Our Pest Control Officers use a variety of safe insecticides to spray the carpets and furnishings and these have a rapid effect on the adults and larvae where we can contact them. However it is important to thoroughly clean the premises prior to our treatment as dirty conditions can cause rapid deactivation of the insecticide. It is also essential to either launder or destroy any animal bedding to deny the fleas their breeding site. Your pets may also need treatment for fleas and you can obtain an insecticide from your Veterinary Surgeon for this purpose.

In order to prevent re-infestation it is important to regularly clean all carpets and furniture especially areas under furniture where pets may lie. It is also necessary to regularly launder any animal bedding and to cleanse any solid animal beds or housings.

For further information please contact:  
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