

INSECT BITES

Nobody likes to think that their cat or dog has fleas. However, they are very common even in the most well cared for animals and even in the cleanest of households. Most fleas associated with an animal live in the soft furnishings and skirting boards. The fact that they may not be seen does not mean they are not there. Unfortunately some people are more sensitive to flea bites than others. Bites may be acquired during a brief contact with someone else's animals.

Re-infestation is common especially with cats. Cats in particular can be very difficult to treat for fleas. They tend to be uncooperative about the application of powders, and dislike certain sprays, and although flea collars may be better tolerated they are not always adequate, and their use prevents treatment with other agents until they have been removed for a suitable interval.

There are many new safe and effective flea treatments available. The best ones are "prescription only medicines" available from your vet. Pet shop products tend to look similar but may contain no active ingredients other than things like mint extract.

The "spot-on" preparations such as Frontline are simply applied to the back of the neck every 1-3 months. There are effective sprays for the home to break the flea life cycle, along with tablets and flea injections (Program). New products are being introduced regularly and it is probably best to discuss with your veterinary surgery which product will best suit you and your pets!

Treat all pets at the same time. Removing the pet usually makes the problem worse as the fleas are forced to live on humans. Fleas can live for up to two years away from animals.