

# Why are fleas a pest?

Fleas are parasitic insects and different species live on particular animals i.e. cat fleas and dog fleas. The human flea is very rare in the UK due to improved hygiene and standards of living. Surveys have shown that most fleas found in the home are cat fleas.

Fleas are visible to the naked eye and are reddish in colour. They are instantly recognisable by their extremely long hind legs and flattened shape. This allows them to move quickly through hairs.

Infestations can spread quickly especially as a female can lay up to 50 eggs a day. Most eggs will fall off the pet and hatch wherever they are in the house, usually where the pet sleeps. Only a small number of the flea population in a house will be on the animal at a given time.

Flea eggs can lay dormant for long periods of time but will be stimulated by vibration and heat. When this happens an adult flea will emerge and seek food (often your ankle). This is why people can experience flea bites when they move in to a property that has been vacant for some time.

## Signs of fleas

Signs of fleas are very distinctive. If you have an infestation of fleas you may have some of the following problems:

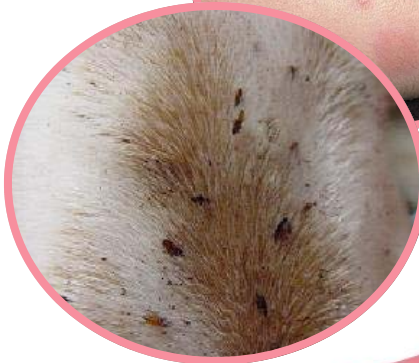
- \* Flea bites— these will show as a swollen itching spot with a single puncture point at the centre. They are usually found where clothes are in close contact with the body e.g. ankles. Bites often appear in clusters or lines of two bites, and can remain itchy and inflamed for up to several weeks
- \* Scratching pets— pets scratching more than usual. and on inspection you find fleas or small black flecks
- \* Sightings of fleas—you may actually see fleas in your home, on yourself or on your pets



## How to prevent an infestation

Following the below tips can help prevent you getting fleas in your home:

- \* Ensure pets are regularly treated for fleas. Spot On is a treatments can be provided by vets. Once applied to the animals skin it will provide protection from fleas (and other pests) for up to two months. A vet should be consulted for the correct treatment for your animal
- \* Vacuum living areas including furniture on a regular basis
- \* Regularly vacuum areas where any animals sleep (disposing of the bag / contents into an outside bin)
- \* Wash bedding and animal bedding in a hot wash regularly



## Control Measures

### How to treat an infestation

If you find that you have fleas in your home you may be able to eradicate the infestation yourself using special insecticide for the treatment of fleas. You can purchase this type of insecticide either from your local vet or DIY centre. The insecticide is usually an aerosol. If you choose to use insecticide you may find the following advice useful:

#### Before using insecticide:

- \* Ensure that all animals allowed inside your home are treated for fleas before any treatment is started. You should see your vet for a suitable treatment for your pet
- \* Keep floor space clear (especially carpeted areas)
- \* Keep food and pet food tidied away
- \* Vacuum all affected areas thoroughly (including cracks, crevices and the edge of carpets) and dispose of the contents into an outside bin. This will help stimulate any eggs / fleas and help the treatment work better

#### Using insecticide:

- \* Always refer to the product instructions BEFORE USE and follow these at all times
- \* Spray floors, carpets and underneath furniture. You should never spray anything which comes into direct contact with human skin e.g. bedding and seating
- \* Start spraying from the corner furthest from the door and cover all of the carpet evenly



#### After using insecticide:

- \* Do not vacuum for 10 days or more if possible. This will allow the insecticide to continue working on any hatching eggs or remaining fleas

#### Private Contractors

In order to eradicate fleas effectively a thorough and extensive treatment maybe required. To get the best results we recommend that you seek a professional pest controller.

They should be a member of the British Pest Control Association (call 01332 294 288 or visit [www.bpca.org.uk](http://www.bpca.org.uk)) or the National Pest Technician Association (call 01949 81133 or visit [www.npta.org.uk](http://www.npta.org.uk)).

When seeking the services of a private contractor you should always obtain a minimum of three quotes. This will allow you to compare service and price.

Even after a treatment some fleas may later hatch causing further problems. Always check that the price given is to eradicate (i.e. a fixed charge). Otherwise they may charge you per visit which could spiral out of control.

#### Leeds City Council Service

The council offers competitive rates for the treatment and control of fleas in both domestic and commercial properties.

For further information or to book a treatment by a qualified and experienced pest control officer please call **0113 2224406**.

Commercial premises can arrange for a free survey and quotation.



# Fleas

*Pest information leaflet*



## Contact us

If you have any questions about the information in this leaflet or would like professional advice please contact Leeds City Council Corporate Call Centre  
0113 2224406  
or email  
[pests@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:pests@leeds.gov.uk)

Further information and copies of this leaflet can be found on the council's website  
[www.leeds.gov.uk/pestcontrol](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/pestcontrol)

Alternatively, you can get further advice from the National Pest Technician's Association or the British Pest Control Association