



MARLTON ANIMAL HOSPITAL, P.A.

“WE CARE”

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Fleas and Your Pet

General Information

Fleas are small, brown or black, wingless insects with flattened bodies. Several species of fleas infest the hair coats of animals, and some may feed on people. These blood-sucking insects may cause considerable irritation and distress to infested pets. Severe infestations may lead to anemia from blood loss. Fleas spread the common dog and cat tapeworm and carry several viral and bacterial diseases. Fleabites can also cause skin allergies, rashes and sores on both pets and their owners. The best places to look for fleas on your pet are the hindquarters, base of the tail, stomach and groin regions. Sometimes no fleas are found but instead tiny granules that resemble black pepper or little commas are seen. This material is flea feces and consists of digested blood. To distinguish this material from dirt, place it on a white paper towel and add a drop of water to it. If you see a reddish-brown color, your pet has fleas, even if you do not see live fleas on your pet.

Life Cycle

Fleas spend 95% of their lives on our pets! They are most troublesome in the summer and fall in the areas with cold winters and warm summers. In warm climates or in our heated homes, fleas can be a year-round problem. A single breeding pair of fleas can produce 20,000 offspring in just 3 months. After taking a blood meal, the female lays slippery eggs on your pet, which fall off as your pet moves about. Eggs hatch after 2-12 days into larvae that feed in the environment. Older larvae spin a cocoon, in which they remain anywhere from one week to one year. The long period during which the larvae can remain in the cocoon explains why fleas are difficult to eliminate, as they are not susceptible to eradication in this state. When conditions are right, hungry adult fleas rapidly emerge from their cocoons and are ready to feed on your pet immediately.

Flea Control

In our area, fleas are a continuous problem. They contribute to a variety of medical conditions such as skin allergies, “hot spots” on the skin, weight loss, tapeworm infestation and most importantly, a poor quality of life for a number of our patients. Flea control used to be an arduous process that involved sprays, bombs, powders and collars. The results of using all these products were at times less than satisfactory, not to mention their potential for toxicity! Fortunately, recent advances in flea control have virtually eliminated the need for treating the yard and house as part of your flea control program. New, topically applied flea control products quickly kill fleas on your pets, preventing infestation and eradicating this pest from your household. Applied year-round, on a monthly basis, flea problems will cease to be an annoyance to you and your pet!

PRESENTLY, MARLTON ANIMAL HOSPITAL IS RECOMMENDING EITHER ADVANTAGE® OR FRONTLINE® FOR FLEA CONTROL, AS WE FEEL THESE ARE THE MOST EFFECTIVE AND LEAST TOXIC OF THE NEW GENERATION OF FLEA CONTROL PRODUCTS. PLEASE, FEEL FREE TO DISCUSS THESE PRODUCTS WITH YOUR VETERINARIAN OR MARLTON ANIMAL HOSPITAL STAFF MEMBER.