**Flea Fact Sheet**

Flea life cycle (average life cycle is 21-28 days)

**Eggs:** Adult fleas jump onto your pet. The female starts laying eggs with 24 hours. She can lay up to 40-50 eggs per day. Eggs are laid in the hair of the coat of your pet. As the pet travels through the house the eggs roll off the hair and land in the surrounding environment. The eggs hatch in the environment in 2-10 days depending on temperature and humidity. Humidity of less than 50% will dry and kill the eggs.

**Larvae:** The eggs hatch and become larvae. They feed on flea feces. They do not like light and will borrow deep into the carpet and other materials searching for food. The larvae stage lasts from 7-21 days.

**Pupa:** They then move to the pupate stage and will make a sticky cocoon. These can be found in soil, vegetation, carpets, under furniture, and on animal bedding. They are in this stage from anywhere between 7-200 days depending on temperature and humidity. In this stage they are very resistant to freezing and drying and remain dormant. They are triggered to hatch by vibration, carbon dioxide (breathing) and warmth.

**Adult:** Newly emerging fleas are attracted to movement and warmth of an animal’s body. Fleas can detect changes in light and exhaled carbon dioxide. They jump on your pet, mate, and then lay eggs within 24 hours and start the vicious cycle all over again.

**Flea Control**

There are important steps to take to eliminate fleas on your pet and in the environment.

1. Apply Advantage, Advantage Multi, Advantix or a Seresto collar as directed. The active ingredients are as follows:
* Imidiclopromide: attacks the central nervous system of insects
* Permethrin: repels and kills parasites (Advantix)
* Pyriproxyfen:an insect growth regulator that prevents the development of all immature flea stages and disrupts the flea life cycle.
1. Vacuum your carpet – especially the area where your pet frequents most. Discard your vacuum bag immediately to prevent the flea eggs and larvae from continuing to develop.
2. Wash all bedding your pet sleeps on weekly.
3. Treat ALL pets living in the house with Advantage, Advantage Multi, Advantix or a Seresto collar.
4. Run a dehumidifier in suspected flea-infested areas. A humidity of 50% or less will dry and kill the eggs.
5. Use knockout spray indoor formula to help control infestation within the house.

Your pet can be re-infesting themselves each time they go outside. Fleas can be introduced to your yard from neighbor’s pets, strays and wildlife. An outdoor spray is recommended if you have an elevated deck, porch or other structure that your pet and/or wildlife can get under. Re-infestation can also occur from your pet lying in a particular area outside.

You may consider the following outdoor sprays:

* Knockout Spray Outdoor Formula
* Bayer Advanced Lawn Complete Insect Killer

Your entire yard will not require treatment. Focus on areas that your pet and wildlife may gravitate towards, such as sandy soiled areas, under shrubs and bushes, and along fence lines. Fleas like moist soil that is protected from direct sunlight.

**Recommendations**

*Flea protection should be used* ***year-round.***

\*Most homes remain above 50% humidity during the winter months when the heat is on, which allows fleas to remain active (although not as active as non-heated times of the year).

*Flea protection should be used for cats (indoor & outdoor) not just for dogs.*

\*Cats are especially targeted by fleas because the most prevalent flea is the “Cat Flea” or Ctenocephalides Felis.

\*Cat’s don’t normally show any symptoms of fleas so they are often overlooked. Make sure to protect ALL of your pets and your family from fleas!

**Other Flea Tips**

1. If you bathe your pet after applying Advantage products make sure you are not using a highly potent shampoo or dish soap, as this will strip the product thus lowering the effectiveness.
2. When applying Advantage products it is critical to part the hair and apply directly to the skin.
3. Fleas can transmit the bacteria causing **Cat Scratch Fever** from cats to humans by introducing flea feces to a cat scratch wound or mucosal surface. Cat Scratch Fever can cause painful lymph nodes near the infected region, chills, fever, backache and abdominal pain. If you have further questions or suspect you have Cat Scratch Fever call your physician.

References:

1. Dryen, Michael. “Flea Control: Real Homes, Real Problems, Real Answers”. Cornell University, Ithaca, NY October 2011.
2. Dryden, Michael. “Premises Flea Control”. Cornell University, Ithaca, NY October 2011.
3. Dryden, Michael. [www.drmichaeldryden.com](http://www.drmichaeldryden.com)

*\*\*As with all the common parasites that infect dogs and cats, it is important to have your pet’s stool tested annually. A fecal test requires a stool sample from your dog or cat. Your cat should be dewormed annually regardless if he or she in an indoor only pet. We recommend monthly heartworm prevention for dogs to prevent heartworm and deworm your dog against other common parasites.*

*Dogs are tested annually with a heartworm combination test. This blood test determines if your dog has heartworm disease, as well as tests for three common tick-bourn diseases. A heartworm combination test requires a small blood sample from your dog.*

*We recommend a monthly flea and tick preventative for both dogs and cats, as well as monthly heartworm prevention for dogs.*