

Fleas, Sex and Blood Meals

A gripping headline for what can be a horrifying experience for some. As temperatures rise things heat up for fleas – there's lots of mating, lots of babies and lots of feeding. The mating and feeding happens on your cats and dogs. As for all of the flea babies, they can hatch anywhere your pets hang out, including your house.



Fleas not only live on cats and dogs but other animals such as rats, mice, rabbits, possums and even hedgehogs. The average flea lays 40-50 eggs per day and each egg is designed to roll off the animal. The eggs make good use of their time on the ground to develop into young hungry fleas that will jump up to half a meter onto passing animals. Within 60 seconds of landing, a young flea bites the animal and has its first blood meal. In just 24 hours after this first feed the flea has grown into an adult and is producing 40-50 eggs per day just like its mother.

For you, this means your cats and dogs can pick up fleas from any environment where other animals have been. Up until 25 years ago the solution was to never have cats and dogs indoors because we did not want our houses turned into maternity wards for fleas. These days there are excellent flea products that can be given to cats and dogs to prevent infestations in the home. They do not repel fleas, but do kill them when they jump onto our pets. This means the fleas die and do not get to drop eggs around your house.

If you have cats and dogs indoors and want to keep your house from being a flea breeding ground then you need to treat your pets all year round. Fleas crawling and biting can drive cats and dogs mad, so talk to us because, as veterinarians, we have the best flea products and advice available. Some of these products such as Nexgard Spectra for dogs also treat worms and ticks. This latest product is easy to give as it is cleverly disguised as a tasty doggy treat.

Thanks to Merial for this article.

