

Flea Treatment Over the Winter Months

While it is tempting to stop flea treatment with the onset of colder weather when flea activity begins to naturally slow down, continuing treatment at this time is extremely important to reduce flea populations. Only 5% of fleas actually on your dog or cat, the rest are in their bedding, the soil, carpet or cracks between the floor boards. They exist in those places as eggs, larvae, pupae and adults. With the recent warm weather these fleas will be coming out of their hiding places and infesting your pet. Fleas can cause allergic skin conditions and also carry a species of tapeworm.

The following is a checklist of things to do to try and limit a flea infestation of your pets and your house.

- ✓ Ensure **all** pets are treated with an effective flea control product (eg Frontline, Advantix, Advantage or Revolution)
- ✓ Treat pets **regularly** (monthly for the above products)
- ✓ Vacuum regularly to remove flea eggs and larvae from the environment.
- ✓ Wash your pet's bedding in water greater than 60⁰C for 10 minutes. This helps to control the number of fleas jumping onto your pet. Any products that can't be washed should be placed in direct sunlight every few days.
- ✓ Prevent your pet accessing areas such as under the house (the ideal climate for fleas!)
- ✓ If using a spot-on flea treatment do not wash your pet until 48 hours after treatment.
- ✓ Avoid having untreated animals visit your animals. Even mice, rats and rabbits carry fleas!

Most flea control products can only control the fleas on the pet. If there are a large number of fleas in the environment you will still see fleas on your pet but these fleas will die very quickly (within 24hrs) and will not be able to produce any eggs (to continue the flea lifecycle).

There are many flea control products in the market place aimed at treating the fleas on your pet and those in the environment. Please contact your vet to find out what product best suits your situation.