

## The Life Cycle of Fleas and how to Avoid them

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### DESCRIPTION

Fleas are small, wingless flies that are about 1.6 to 3.4 millimeters long and are active, usually dark in color. It belongs to the class Insecta. Fleas come under the phylum Arthropoda. They mainly feed on the blood of birds and mammals. Fleas are commonly found in tropical, temperate and Polar Regions. Invasion of fleas leads to inflammation of the skin and severe itching. Fleas are mainly responsible for transmitting diseases like bubonic plague. Moreover, they can transmit the bacterial disease murine typhus, which is spread to humans by infected rats. The most common type of flea observed in our daily life is Ctenocephalides fleas, or cat flea, which is also called domestic fleas. Other types of fleas include human fleas, dog fleas, and rat fleas. Tunga penetrans is the smallest identified flea, with a 1.5 mm length. Cat fleas infest cats, dogs, humans, and wild animals. Dog fleas are similar to cat fleas, but these are rare. Chigoe fleas, which are also known as sand fleas, mostly feed on people near tropical coasts.

### LIFE CYCLE

The life cycle of fleas contains four stages: egg, larvae, pupa, and adult. Generally, fleas lay their eggs on the bodies of birds or in their habitats. Larvae are small and legless and feed on organic debris like dried bits of skin, dead mites, and dried excrement. The larva turns into a silk cocoon that contains debris from the nest and moves into the pupal stage. The pupa develops into an adult after several days or months. The life cycle depends on the

temperature and environmental conditions. It may vary from weeks to months. Flea bites are irritating and itchy, which leads to skin infections and hair loss. Fleas can also transmit horrible diseases. If left untreated, fleas can multiply rapidly and cause illness. Fleas are most common in pets such as dogs. When the pets ingest the fleas, the tapeworm present in their bodies grows inside the pet and leads to itching and weight loss. These tapeworms are similar to maggots in physical appearance and measure 12 inches long. Due to the flea infestation, the red blood cell count in animals will decrease. Thus, they become anemic. These are mostly found in cool and freezing temperatures. If you are suffering from diseases like plague, it is best to consult a physician. Fleas can produce as many as 450 to 550 offspring in their lifetime. Therefore, it is very difficult to control the flea infestations.

### CONCLUSION

There are some preventive methods to get rid of fleas. Keep a clean home. Practicing good sanitation plays a main role in avoiding an invasion. Wash carpets, floors, and furniture on a regular basis, and rinse bed linens frequently to eliminate any existing fleas and prevent egg laying. It's important to eliminate any rodent harborage, as fleas can transport themselves on rodents. Remove any moisture that has accumulated around the items. Clean pets after walks or playtime with other animals. Clean pet bedding, collars, and plush toys regularly. Consult the veterinarian about flea prevention treatments.

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