

Barrie Veterinary Barker

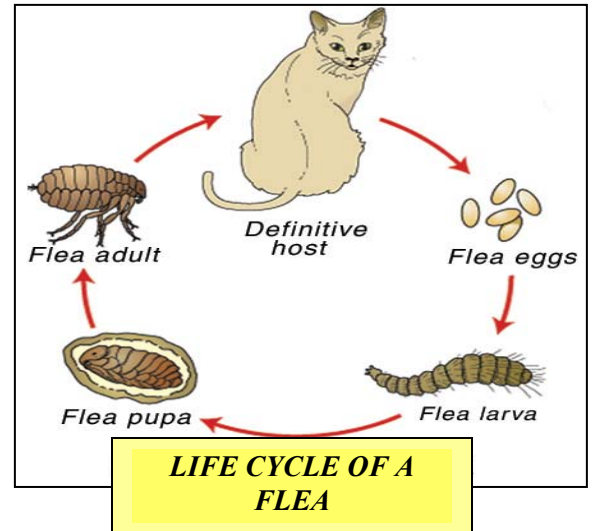
Official Hospital Newsletter

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FLEA SEASON IS HERE!

Dogs and cats share the same fleas. It is important that all pets in your home are on a flea preventive. Treating your pet for fleas has never been easier. With the many choices we have today, we can provide you with the safest and most effective flea preventive for your pet's needs. When it comes to environmental control, we must first understand the flea life cycle. There are four stages in the life cycle of the flea:

Flea eggs are off white in colour and about 0.5 mm (1/32") in length. They are unlikely to be seen without a magnifying glass. The adult flea lays eggs after taking a blood meal. The eggs are initially laid on the dog's skin but fall off into the environment to continue their life cycle. Flea eggs constitute approximately 50% of the total flea population. Eggs may hatch in as little as 14 to 28 days, depending on environmental conditions. High humidity and temperature favour rapid hatching. **Flea larvae** are about 2-5 mm (1/8 to 1/4") in length. They feed on organic debris found in their environment and on adult flea feces. They dislike strong light and move deep into carpet fibers or under furniture, organic debris, grass, branches, leaves, soil, etc. Flea larvae prefer warm, dark and moist areas. Outdoor larval development occurs only in shaded, moist areas where flea infested pets spend a significant amount of time. Our climate-controlled homes offer an ideal environment for the flea life cycle to thrive. The **flea pupae** produce a protective silk-like cocoon that is sticky. It quickly becomes coated with grime and debris, which acts as a useful camouflage. With warmth and humidity, pupae become adult fleas in 5-10 days. The adults do not emerge from the cocoon unless stimulated by physical pressure, carbon dioxide or heat. This is important since once fleas emerge from the cocoon they can only exist for a few days unless they are able to feed. Pre-emerged adult fleas can survive within the cocoon for up to 9 months. During this time they are resistant to insecticides applied to the environment. This is important to remember because adult fleas may emerge into the environment a considerable time after you apply insecticides in your home. Once emerged the **flea adult**, unlike the larvae, is attracted to light and emerges to the surface in order to encounter a passing host to feed upon. Two days after the first blood meal, female fleas begin egg production. In normal circumstances the adult female will live up to three weeks, laying approximately 40 eggs per day. The entire life cycle, from egg to adult flea can be completed in 14-28 days depending on environmental conditions. A female flea could potentially lay up to 800 eggs in her lifetime!



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ARE FLEAS HARMFUL AND HOW CAN THEY BE PREVENTED?

Fleas can cause anemia, especially in young or debilitated dogs. A single female flea can take up to 15 times her body weight in blood over the several weeks of her adult life. In addition fleas can carry several diseases and also act as vectors to spread one of the most common tape worms of the dog and cat, *Dipylidium caninum*. Shampoos, sprays, powders and spot-on preparations are all available to control and prevent fleas. Be sure to consult your vet to choose the most effective and safe flea products for your home and pet. The newer topical and oral flea preventives will greatly assist you in solving your flea problems. With persistence and patience, you and your pet will be flea-free in no time!



CONTINUED OVER



WEST NILE VIRUS (WNV)-FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What is West Nile Virus?

A: WNV is an insect borne virus transmitted by mosquitoes that causes inflammation of the brain, (encephalitis). Most infections with WNV have been identified in wild birds, horses and humans, but the virus can also infect various other wild and domestic animals.

Q: How is West Nile Virus Transmitted?

A: Mosquitoes draw the virus from infected birds and transmit it to animals through bites. The virus is not transmitted directly from animal to person, person to animal or person-to-person.

Q: Can West Nile Virus cause illness in dogs and cats?

A: Rarely. Although infection with WNV has been demonstrated in some dogs and cats there have been only a few reports of any dogs and cats becoming severely ill with this disease. Just as it is in humans it is possible that dogs and cats may develop mild temporary "flu-like" signs with infection such as lethargy and fever that resolves without treatment.

Q: Is there a West Nile Virus vaccine for dogs or cats?

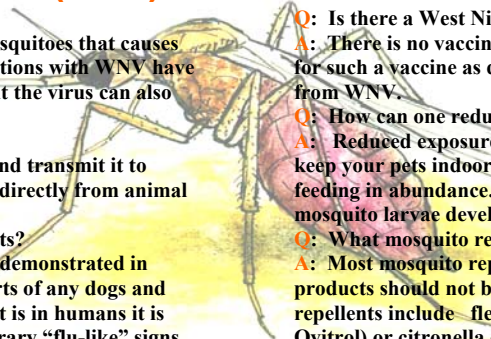
A: There is no vaccine for dogs and cats and at present there is no need for such a vaccine as dogs and cats are not very susceptible to disease from WNV.

Q: How can one reduce the risk of WNV infection in our pets?

A: Reduced exposure to mosquitoes. Make sure screens are not broken, keep your pets indoors especially at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are feeding in abundance. Eliminate standing water in your yard where mosquito larvae develop.

Q: What mosquito repellants can be used on our pets?

A: Most mosquito repellents for people contain DEET and these products should not be used on dogs and cats. Acceptable mosquito repellents include flea sprays containing pyrethrin or permethrin (e.g. Ovitrol) or citronella containing products such as Avon Skin So Soft. Revolution, Program and Advantage do not repel mosquitoes.



Dog owners, in particular, love to share all of their summer activities with their furry friends. Pets go along to the shopping mall, to stroll on the beach or to check out Promenade Days. And of course dogs love to be with their people—even if it puts their lives at risk. Yes, **puts their lives at risk**. That happy, endearing, tongue-lolling grin may also be a warning of impending heat stroke. Just as with people, severe heat stroke will cause nausea, loss of consciousness, irreparable brain damage, and, finally, death. Remember that blacktop parking lot? You've seen the heat waves shimmering up off it. You've felt the heat right through the bottom of your shoes, maybe even had to clean off bits of melted tar when you got home. Now, imagine walking barefoot down a blacktopped street. That's what you're asking your dog to do when you take him to events downtown. Ouch! And, hey. how hot is that beach sand he has to lie down in? So, you'll leave him in the car, right? **Wrong!** Don't leave your best friend in there...not even for a few minutes. Here are the boring statistics--this info may keep you from loving your pet to death. On an 85-degree day, the temperature inside of your car, even with the windows open a bit, will climb to **102 degrees in 10 minutes!** After 30 minutes it will go up to **120 degrees** or even higher! On a 90-degree day, temps in that car can top **160 degrees** faster than you can walk around the block. If you really love your pet leave

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him/her at home in a nice, cool, place with plenty of fresh water to drink, and remember to replenish it everyday. In fact, if it's an exceptionally hot day, keep your pet in the house with you and use a fan or the air conditioning. If it's too hot for you to go outside then it's too hot for them to go outside too! Should your pet develop heatstroke, (extreme panting, vomiting, exhaustion, agitation, or, in extreme cases, after the previous symptoms manifest themselves, the gums will take on a grayish tinge & the tongue will turn blue). **Take immediate action!** Immerse the pet in **luke** warm water or hose him/her down with a gentle but soaking spray. **Lower the body temperature down first and then call your vet!** And about that heavy coat your dog is sporting? It actually helps to **insulate and protect** him/her from the heat? (As long as the fur is free from mats!) Shaving an animal down could result in heatstroke or sunburn so if you're thinking of giving your pet a new hairdo this summer please be sure to check with your veterinarian first! Bee stings & spider bites are another summer nuisance for both pets & their people. Pets are curious, especially if it makes noise & flies. Bites & stings from most flying insects can cause swelling or soreness. All spider bites are toxic but most will only cause local swelling and tissue reaction. Call your veterinarian for advice if you notice any sort of bite on your pet because some can cause allergic reactions that need to be treated. Not

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only do dogs and cats love to chase bugs but porcupines and skunks are a favourite as well! If your dog has a run-in with a porcupine it is always recommended to bring the pet to your veterinarian & have the quills properly removed. Should your best friend choose to bother a stinky skunk your local vet will also provide you with the appropriate remedies to rid you and your home of the nasty smell. "SKUNK-OFF" is a product our practice recommends and it may be a good idea to have some on hand for those furry pals that tend to have run-ins with those pesky black and white critters every season! Skunk spray can be harmful if it gets in your animal's eyes and if so you should certainly bring him/her to the vet. And we can't forget about our water-loving dogs. If you have a dog that loves to swim in lake or swampy areas be sure to check it's ears often as extensive exposure to these wet & potentially dirty waters can cause ear infections. Exposure to these wetlands can also cause "HOT SPOTS", large, raw, inflamed areas of skin. These areas will become moist and painful and may begin spreading due to continued licking and chewing. Anti-inflammatory medications & antibiotics are often used to relieve the intense itching & combat secondary skin infection. If you keep all of these aforementioned facts in mind you and your pets should not only have a great summer, but a great summer, *together!*

