

# Dunkirk Animal Clinic



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## **Flea Facts**

### **The Flea Life Cycle:**

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EGGS are laid on the pet and fall to the ground where they hatch into larvae.

The LARVAL STAGES feed on organic material in the environment. They live deep in the carpet or lawn.

The PUPAE develop when the larvae form cocoons. They quickly emerge as adult fleas when ideal temperature (above 70 degrees F) and humidity (above 70%) exist.

The ADULT flea has up to 30 days to find a host or it will die. After the female's first blood meal, the reproductive cycle begins and within 48 hours she starts laying her eggs.



### **Flea Behavior:**

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Summer months provide perfect breeding, feeding and hatching conditions for fleas. When conditions are right, the insect can go through its entire life cycle (from egg to adult) in as few as 10-14 days. The adult's life span on the pet can extend several weeks. THIS APPLIES ONLY TO AN UNTREATED ANIMAL. Even in winter, the fight against the flea may not end. Outside conditions may prevent or limit flea development; but inside the home, temperature conditions still permit growth.

Untreated animals can carry and support a colony of 60-100 fleas per week. Each female in a colony lays an average of 20 eggs per day and can produce as many as 600 eggs each month. A pet carrying approximately 60 fleas may yield as many as 36,000 eggs in a month.

The adult flea spends its entire life on the pet. If it leaves the host, its chances for survival are greatly reduced. Adult fleas live in carpets, drapes, furniture, or bedding only until they find the right host. However, eggs, larvae and pupae are found exclusively in the environment. This is the reason that successful flea control programs involve both pet and environment. The ideal time to start or intensify the flea control effort is early in the season when you have your dog examined for heartworms. In some areas and for some flea allergic pets, year-round treatment is necessary.

Some fleas may be seen after treatment. They will die after contact with the pet, but new fleas will replace them unless fleas are controlled in the environment. Killing fleas on the pet eliminates generations of new fleas, because the female must feed (bite) before she can lay eggs.

Remember, fleas cause more than just irritation to you and your pet. Fleas cause anemia, result in fleabite dermatitis and are involved in the transmission of tapeworms and other diseases.

We can never repeat too often that the key to successful flea control is to treat the pet and the pet's surroundings thoroughly and regularly.