**How to get rid of flea infestations in your house!**

**Flea Life Cycle**: There are four stages in the life cycle of a flea: egg, larva, pupa, and adult. Depending on the environmental temperature and humidity levels, the total life cycle will take anywhere from a couple weeks to many months. Optimal conditions for fleas are between 70-85°F and 70 percent humidity. A single adult female can lay about 40 eggs every day. They spend the majority of their time living on the host while they feed, breed, and lay eggs, and can live anywhere from a couple of weeks to several **months** on the host animal.

**Here’s how to start eliminating fleas from your home:**

* Use a powerful vacuum on any floors, upholstery, and mattresses. Cracks and other tight spaces are usually good hiding places for fleas and their cohort of eggs, larvae, and cocoons. If you can, use a vacuum with a bag you can dispose of without coming into contact with its contents.
* Employ a steam cleaner for carpets and upholstery, including pet beds. The combination of high heat and soap is the enemy of fleas in all stages of life. Pay special attention to any hot spots where your pet usually lies down.
* Wash all bedding, including your pet’s, in hot water. Dry it at the highest heat setting. If the infestation is severe, consider getting rid of old bedding and starting anew.
* Use chemical treatments. Aerosol sprays are recommended over the foggers, as you can direct the spray under beds or other places that the foggers may be unable to reach. Choose an insecticide that contains both an adulticide, such as permethrin, that kills adult fleas, and an insect growth regulator, such as methoprene or pyriproxyfen, that kills the eggs, larvae, and pupae. People and pets shouldn’t come into contact with the spray until it has dried. Be sure to wear gloves when you apply the spray, and only spray when everyone is out of the house.

**How to eliminate fleas from pets:**

Pets can be treated either by a veterinarian or the pet owner. Many products are available for flea treatment of the animal. Examples of topical medications are Frontline Gold® and Revolution®. Oral Treatments include Bravecto® and Nexgard®. The only flea collar on the market that works is the Seresto collar. These products are available through your veterinarian. To have the treatment be most effective do not wash the dog or cat two days before or two days after administration of the topical. Please avoid any products from Walmart or similar stores. Their products have been around for so long and we are seeing adverse reactions.

When a flea infestation happens, all pets that go indoor and outdoor are advised to be on a flea & tick preventative for at least 6 months. The best preventative to avoid a flea infestation is to keep your pets on a flea & tick preventative from the months of March to November or even year round.

**How to treat your yard:**

* Mow your lawn regularly and rake the exposed surfaces thoroughly. Fleas like to hide in tall grass. Make sure to bag the contents rather than add them to your compost pile.
* Remove all debris, such as dead leaves and twigs, from flower beds and from under any bushes. Expose as much of the shady areas to sunlight as you can.
* Spread cedar chips on the areas where your pet likes to lie down, under the bushes, and on flower beds.
* Ask your gardening center about nematodes, which are small worms that can eat parasite eggs, and sulphur granules. You can spread both around problem areas to help remove fleas.
* If you choose to use a pesticide to eliminate outdoor fleas, follow the directions on the product label, and make sure to abide by all safety warnings. Most flea pesticides come in the form of hose sprayers or tank pumps. You can hire a professional to administer the treatments, but if you prefer to do it yourself, make sure to cover up. Wear a dust mask, protective clothing, and gloves. Make sure you remove toys from the yard before spraying, and keep children and pets off the treated areas until those areas are dry, or until the product instructions indicates it is safe. Most applications of insecticide will need to be repeated in two to three weeks after your first round.