



DON'T PANIC! EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FLEAS & HOW TO TREAT THE PET AND HOME

Fleas and other external parasites are very common in shelter pets since many animals come into our care as strays or have been living outside. At some point as a foster parent you will be exposed to fleas, but never fear! It's easily treated and the SPCA has preventive measures in place to help keep the exposure down to a minimum.

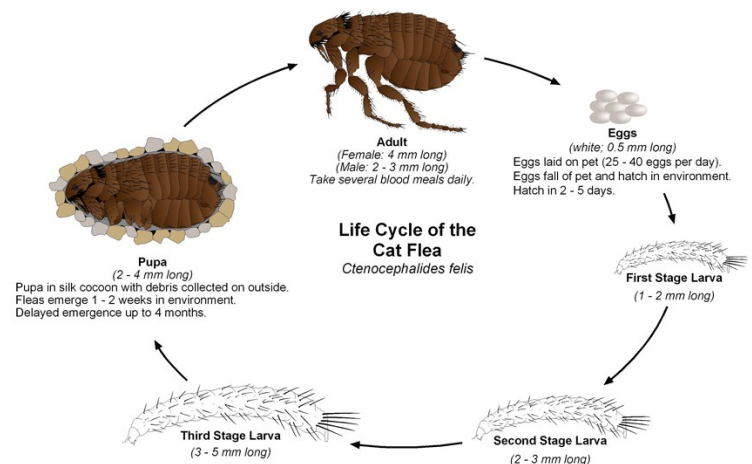
WHAT ARE THEY & HOW DOES MY FOSTER PET GET THEM?

Fleas are common external parasites of both dogs and cats. The adults are blood-feeders, consuming up to 15 times their body weight in blood per day. The bites can cause intense itching and irritation, and a hypersensitive animal will often require veterinary assistance; this is called a flea allergy. Fleas can also transmit tapeworms and bacterial infections.

Pets initially become infested when adult fleas occurring indoors or outdoors jump on the animal. With the ability to jump vertically up to about 6 inches, the adults can easily hitch a ride onto a passing dog or cat, or even the shoes and pant legs of a human. Pets acquire fleas from kennels, groomers, or from stray dogs, cats or wildlife wandering through the yard. Contrary to popular belief, fleas seldom jump directly from one pet to another. Adult fleas spend most of their time on the dog or cat and their bedding, not in the carpet. This is why treatment of the pet is an essential step in ridding a home of fleas.

Signs that your foster pets has fleas:

- Scratching excessively
- Hair loss, typically found on the lower back, inside thighs, abdomen and neck area
- An unusual amount of chewing and licking
- Black specks found on the skin and coat or on your pet's blankets and bedding



HOW TO TREAT & PREVENT FLEAS

Even if your cat, rabbit or dog never goes outside if you are planning on fostering with the SPCA, we recommend routine flea and tic prevention to help protect your personal pet(s) against any external and internal parasites your foster pet may bring home. The type and frequency should be discussed with your personal veterinarian prior to fostering.

The SPCA of Wake County treats all dogs, cats and rabbits regardless of exposure or infestation upon intake with flea prevention as part of the onboarding protocol. The type of prevention is determined by our vet, the pet's medical needs (example: if a pet has a history of being allergic to Nexgard, we will opt for a different prevention) and the least stressful application. The date the prevention or treatment is applied and any follow-up care will be written on the foster pick up form.

Not all types of flea/tick prevention works the same way in terms of killing and prevention (see chart for more details), so fleas may be still be seen once a foster pet enters the home. If fostering an adult dog, they can always pick up fleas and ticks outside on walks or in the yard so regular brushing and fur checks may be a good addition to your routine, especially during the warmer months. If fleas are found, notify the Foster Coordinator via text, call or email so any additional medication and care can be administered.

BATHING

A bath can be given to felines and canines in the foster home under the guidance and direction of the Foster Coordinator. **Never bathe a rabbit as the stress of a bath can cause them to go into shock. If a rabbit has a heavy flea infestation, the SPCA vet will develop a plan of action and consult an offsite vet in regards to bathing.**

For adult dogs and cats, regular pet shampoo is sufficient after waiting the appropriate amount of time outlined in the chart. For puppies and kittens 4 weeks and older, Blue Dawn Dish Soap (yep, only the blue colored dish soap!) is safe to use in place of puppy or kitten shampoo. *Do not* apply soap on the face, especially around the eyes and only a dollop of pet shampoo or Blue Dawn dish soap is needed. A helpful trick to keeping fleas from swarming to this area, make a ring of shampoo around the neck!

Type of Prevention	<u>Revolution</u> topical prevention	<u>Frontline</u> topical prevention	<u>Nexgard</u> given orally, dogs only	<u>Capstar</u> given orally
Parasite(s) protection	Fleas and ear mites (external), Heartworms and intestinal worms (internal)	Fleas, ticks and chewing lice	Fleas, ticks and demodectic & sarcoptic mange (skin mites)	Fleas
How fast does it kill fleas?	Within 48hrs	Within 48hrs	Fleas will start perishing within 4hrs & should be eradicated within 48hrs	Within 24hrs
When it's reapplied	Can be applied monthly if needed for flea infestation/ allergy	Can be applied monthly if needed for flea infestation/ allergy	Can be applied monthly if needed for flea infestation/ allergy	Given once as 24hr control to kill fleas if unable to bathe
How long to wait before bathing a pet	48hrs is recommended, but after ~4hrs of application its still effective	48hrs is recommended, but after 24hrs of application its still effective	Because NexGard is an oral product, swimming or bathing has no effect on NexGard.	Because CapStar is an oral product, swimming or bathing has no effect on CapStar.

If you are fostering kittens or puppies under 4 weeks old, please watch the Kitten Lady's, How to Bathe Foster Kittens when they have Fleas on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/jkZnUF846zw> and consult the Foster Coordinator for instructions prior to getting started. It's vital that neonatals stay warm and bathing can cause hyperthermia or even burns on the skin if not heavily monitoring the temperature of the water and quickly drying the pet.

HOW TO CLEAN YOUR FOSTER SPACE

- Wash all bedding in hot, soapy water.
- Dust and wipe down your foster space from top to bottom. Flea eggs can reside in curtains and baseboards.
- Vacuum all carpets, upholstery, hardwood floors, linoleum, and tiled floors.
- Throw away the vacuum bag or wipe down the canister afterwards.
- Repeat the above steps at least once a week for 2-3 weeks or until no more fleas are seen
- For heavy infestations, consult with the Foster Coordinator and your personal vet prior to treating the yard or home as not all extermination products are pet safe.

RECOMMENDED PRODUCTS:

Make sure to read and follow all instructions on product labels prior to applying to an area. Never spray the area when pets are in the room and ideally not even in the home.

1. Blue Dawn Dish Soap
2. Flea combs
3. Vet's Best: Flea & Tick Home Spray
4. Virbac Knockout Area Treatment

