

Fleas



Flea infestations in UK homes are usually cat fleas and dog fleas. These are small, wingless insects about 1-3mm (millimetres) long. They are dark coloured and have very narrow bodies with well-developed legs which allow them to jump long distances. Their bodies are covered with spines that point backwards. These spines help the fleas move between the hairs of the animal they are on.

The females lay four to eight eggs after each meal. The eggs fall into the nest of the animal they live on or wherever the animal happens to be at that time.

The eggs hatch in about 10 days. The larvae feed on dried blood and other types of food materials.

Flea larvae are 1.5mm long and look a lot like maggots. They are a dirty-white colour and have 13 segments. On each segment there are hairs that point backwards.

When the larvae are mature they spin silken cocoons which they stay in for from seven days up to a year.

The adult cat flea will often stay within its cocoon until vibrations stimulate it to emerge. Cat and dog fleas bite humans just as much as they bite the animal they live on, but they need to feed on the animal's blood before they can reproduce.



Flea larvae
(not actual size)



Dog/Cat Flea
(not actual size)

How are fleas treated, and where can I get help?

The form of treatment is likely to be an insecticide spray.

Immediately before the treatment the pest-control contractor may ask you to do the following:

- Vacuum floors and furniture, including cracks and crevices, especially where pets are likely to have been. Throw the vacuum bag away or empty the vacuum container.

- Pick things up off the floor and unplug electrical equipment.
- Make sure that animals, fish, children and anyone who has asthma are not in the property at the time of the treatment
- Treat any cats and dogs for fleas, and either destroy their bedding or wash it in hot water
- Make sure that food is covered and put away.

After treatment, the pest-control contractor may give you the following advice:

- Make sure that children do not touch treated areas. If they do, make sure they wash their hands afterwards.
- Do not vacuum for 10 to 14 days after the treatment.
- Keep children, pets and anyone who suffers from asthma out of the treated rooms until the treatment is dry (normally a few hours).

Where to get help

We no longer provide a pest-control service, but you can find a list of local accredited pest control contractors by using the directory on the British Pest Control Associations (BPCA) website at www.bpca.org.uk or phone **01332 294288**.

Or you can find a list of contractors in directories like the Yellow Pages, or by searching online.

Rochford District Council

Council Offices, South Street, Rochford,
Essex SS4 1BW

Phone: **01702 318111**

Email: customerservices@rochford.gov.uk

Website: [www.rochford.gov.uk/pest control](http://www.rochford.gov.uk/pest%20control)

If you would like this information in large print, Braille or another language phone us on

01702 318111