



cat adoption team

Fleas Happen - Even to indoor-only cats

Fleas are very industrious; they will hitch a ride on your shoe-lace to get inside to feast on your indoor-only cat. It only takes one flea to cause plenty of trouble. Use the information below to help you determine your course of action.

How to tell if your cat has fleas

Many of us with indoor-only cats may not know the signs fleas have come to live with you.

- Persistent scratching, chewing, and licking
- Flea dirt (the black dots you see when you flea comb your cat)
- Irritated skin

Removing them from your cat's environment

Before you go out and purchase flea pesticides to get rid of them, please check with your veterinarian on the best options for your cat. Many pesticides can quite harmful to your pet and to you.

- Topical flea control that treats fleas in all stages of its life are very effective (brands include Frontline, Advantage, or Revolution). These are monthly treatments that may need to be given over several months. CAT's in-shelter retail store does sell cat Advantage.
- Flea comb your cat often. When you catch a live flea in the comb, just squish it with paper towel, and continue.
- Vacuuming, thoroughly and often, does wonders to remove fleas from the environment.
- Try sprinkling Borax on your carpet, work it down to the fibers, and let it sit for a day prior to vacuuming (keep the Borax-treated area dry). You may need to repeat a few times. Borax deprives the flea eggs of moisture, essentially drying them out. Please do not use Borax on your pet.
- Treat all your pets at the same time, not just the ones with obvious flea infestations.
- Mow your lawn regularly as the heat from the sun can penetrate the soil and kill flea larvae living there.
- Do NOT use canine flea-control products on your cat.

How fleas harm your cat

Just having fleas in your house may be bad enough; however, your cat may suffer in other ways. Please check with your cat's veterinarian for diagnosis and treatment.

- Anemia from blood loss due to flea infestation. Kittens may be particularly susceptible to anemia. Check to see if your cat's gums are pale.
- Tapeworms seem synonymous with fleas. If you see rice-like pellets around your cat's behind, your cat has a tapeworm. You should treat for both.
- Excessive scratching can cause hair loss.

If you want/need more information about cat-friendly flea control and ways to keep them at bay, CAT recommends you speak with your cat's veterinarian. If you Google "*flea control*" you will find the Internet is teaming with information.