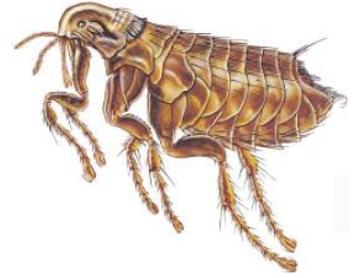




Fleas

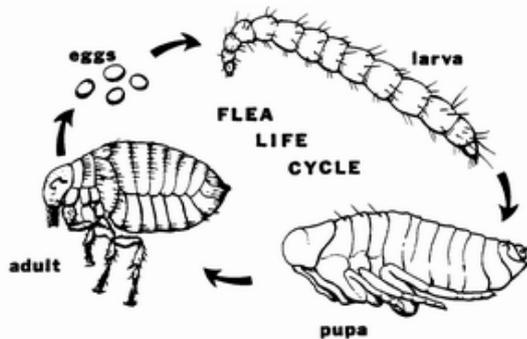
There are several different types of fleas including Cat Flea (*Ctenocephalides felis*), Dog Flea (*Ctenocephalides canis*), Bird Flea (*Ceratophyllus gallinae*), and Hedgehog Flea (*Archaeopsyllus erinacei*). They vary in size from 1-8mm. Most are brownish in colour.

Most problems in our homes are caused by cat fleas. Dog can also carry cat fleas!



Life Cycle

Typically, adult female fleas will jump onto their host while it is outside. These will then feed on the host, and once in your home they will begin to lay eggs. Generally, these are laid in pet fur or pet bedding, but soon drop off into dwelling areas such as baskets or carpets. A female flea is capable of laying as many as 400-800 eggs, usually in batches of up to 20, during its lifetime (approximately 2 years).



Flea eggs are approximately half a mm long, pearly white in colour, and laid on a pet or in it's bedding.

Depending on temperature, these eggs will usually hatch within 2-16 days. The emerging larvae are active, hiding from light and feeding on dust and flea droppings. It takes between 7-10 days for each larvae to fully develop. From this, the adult flea then takes another 10-17 days to develop, under average conditions. When the adult flea emerges, it will begin to actively seek a blood meal, and the lifecycle begins once again.

In humans, fleabites can produce an allergic reaction. The typical symptoms to a flea bite are a small red spot 5mm or so in diameter. In sensitive individuals, the response can be worse and the bite intensity itchy. Advice on flea bites can be obtained by contacting NHS Direct by calling 0845 46 57

Controlling Fleas

Fleas can very quickly spread to many parts of the house, and so are often difficult to treat using off the shelf products. Before any treatment starts you should ensure you have identified all the areas which are likely to need treatment.

- **If you wish to treat the problem yourself:** A range of insecticides are available. Ensure that you carefully read the label and follow all the manufacturers' safety precautions. Remember that treatments designed for pets are unlikely to effectively control fleas in the rooms of your home, and conversely treatments for your home are unsuitable for use on your pet.
- **If you request our help:** We will typically use a water based spray, which dries to leave a very fine film of insecticide powder behind. You will need to stay out of treated rooms until the chemical has dried – typically this will take a couple of hours. Our Pest Control officer will survey your property first, and advise where the treatment should be applied. We will not treat if we feel it is not safe to do so. It may take a few days before the problem is fully resolved.

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Any treatment should have three stages:

1. Before treating rooms in your home

Before any chemical control is commenced you must ensure that the area has been correctly prepared. This will involve:

- All floors and upholstered furniture should be vacuumed to remove animal hair, organic debris, flea eggs and pupae. Particular attention should be given to the areas where pets have been allowed to roam and rest, such as under furniture, under chair and sofa cushions, cracks and crevices in floors and along walls. The vacuum bag will contain flea eggs and pupae so should be disposed of immediately in an outside waste bin.
- All articles such as clothes, linen and toys should be removed from the floor so the entire surface can be treated.
- All tile and concrete floors should be swept and washed or vacuumed.

2. Treating Pets

- Any cats and dogs should be treated for fleas and with an animal insecticide recommended specifically for that purpose. Pet bedding should be destroyed or washed in hot soapy water to destroy immature and adult fleas. Contact your vet for further advice. It may not be safe for pets to return to treated rooms straight away so ensure you have made arrangements for them to stay elsewhere.
- You will need to ensure that you regularly treat your pet with a suitable flea control to prevent the problem reoccurring.

3. After the Treatment

- Do not vacuum, or mop for at least 10-14 days after treatment. This will give the powder a chance to eliminate all stages of flea infestation and growth.

Will the treatment work straight away?

Most treatments are designed to have a 'knock down' effect quickly killing adult and juvenile fleas. However they are less effective against eggs and pupae. It can take a few days for these to become exposed to the chemical and succumb.

Most chemicals remain active for many days or even weeks after they have been applied – provided that they are not washed or vacuumed away. It is unusual to need to apply more chemical, and further treatment may not speed up the control process.

Services from Us.

The Borough Council's Pest Control Service can assist with the treatment of Flea problems, we will apply a residual insecticide, usually in the form of a spray.

- To request our help please call 01782 742590 during office hours or see our website.
- Our current charges are detailed on our website at www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk , or available by calling our Customer Services Team on 01782 742590
- Some landlords may pay this charge on your behalf if you live in rented accommodation.
- Our waiting times are typically 3-5 working days.

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