

When is Flea Season in Florida?

Fleas are active January through December! A common myth is that fleas are only in the environment during the hotter times of the year. Florida's sub-tropic climate allows for fleas to feed and reproduce year-round, and if you are seeing adult fleas on your pets, it's only the tip of the iceberg. Adult fleas make up only 5% of the total population, and other life stages such as flea eggs, larvae, and pupae can also exist in the environment. And worse yet, female adult fleas can lay up to 50 microscopic eggs daily that incubate and hatch in your carpets and on your furniture. An adult flea has the potential to lay thousands of eggs within a lifetime, with a new generation emerging every few weeks.

What is a flea's favorite food? Blood! Severe infestations of fleas can cause anemia in our four-legged friends. Did you know, adult fleas also have the potential to carry tapeworm larva? If your dog or cat ingests only 1 flea, it puts them at risk for tapeworm infections. Fleas can also cause allergic reactions and skin issues in your pets, leading to scratching and secondary skin infections.

Indoor only pets are also at risk! Fleas love to hitchhike on your socks, shoes, and pant legs. So while you are outside enjoying the fresh air, fleas are obtaining free admission into your home!

These are the many reasons that veterinarians recommend your furry family members stay on flea prevention year-round. Skipping just 1 month can put your family at risk. Don't be fooled by natural remedies or over-the-counter flea medications, many of these are ineffective against all stages of the flea life cycle. Some over-the-counter medications can even cause toxicities in felines!

Is your pet in need of flea prevention? Your veterinarian can help by discussing and recommending the prevention that best suits your and your pet's lifestyle. Effective treatment includes treating not only your pets, but also your environment. Your veterinarian can discuss ways to best treat your household and environment to break the lifecycle.

Call your veterinarian and be sure to stay safe from these little vampires during Florida's flea season!

-Dr. Lockwood, DVM and Liz Bigelow, CVT