

# FLEAS

## Self-Help Without the Use of Potentially Harmful Chemicals

Please note that the following self-help advice is not a substitute for professional help but should go some way to alleviating your problem until we can attend once the risks posed by Covid-19 have fallen to a safer level.

### Pets:

- Most fleas found in domestic dwellings are cat fleas.
- Make sure that all pets have been treated with an effective flea control product – this should normally be done every month.
- If you do not have pets, then you will be pleased to know that fleas cannot successfully breed without access to their host species. The infestation will decrease over time, but nobody wants to wait that long.

### Vacuum Clean:

- Vacuuming all areas helps to remove any debris, eggs, larvae and adult fleas.
- Hotspots will be where pets sleep or rest and landing places after jumping down from furniture, also fleas prefer shady spots to lay their eggs – ie under cupboards, bookcases, beds etc.
- The vibration of the vacuum cleaner also helps to stimulate adults to hatch from their cocoon stage.
- Remember to remove the waste collection compartment/bag, from the vacuum cleaner, and dispose of it in an outside bin.
- Constant vacuuming (2 or 3 times a day) will significantly decrease the number of adult fleas in the property. The fewer adults there are, the less likely that they will be laying fresh eggs.

### Heat:

- Temperatures over 60 degrees centigrade will kill all forms of the insects, a home steamer can be very effective at killing them if you suspect they are hiding under beds or other shady locations.
- If you think that they are hiding in your (or your pet's) clothes or bedding, then a hot (60 degree) wash or 30-minute hot tumble-dry will kill them. Make sure you bag up anything that you are transporting around the house to avoid spreading the problem.
- Extreme cold will also kill fleas, if you have delicate clothes or toys then bagging and placing in a freezer for a few days will be equally effective.



Rodents



General  
Insects



Flying  
Insects



Stored Product  
Insects



Birds



Wildlife

## Diatomaceous Earth:

- Diatomaceous Earth (DE) is a natural product made from tiny ground-up fossilised sea creatures. It is safe to use in all domestic situations. Although it is non-toxic, care should be taken if there is a risk of anyone inhaling it as it may irritate eyes and throat.
- When insects crawl through or over DE, it absorbs their oily protective layer leading to dehydration and eventual death – this is not as quick as using insecticides, but it is a lot safer.
- Sprinkle it liberally where you think the fleas might be laying eggs and around those live hotspots mentioned above. Leave it alone to do its job for at least three days after which it can be safely vacuumed up. Repeat this process every week for about 30 days.
- DE is readily available online but do not be tempted to buy the expensive products labelled as effective against mites or insects. Most DE is basically the same but choose one of the great majority which is labelled “Food Grade” as this is limited to the amount of poisonous heavy metals it may contain.

**Please make sure that you follow the instructions or product labels (or sometimes the manufacturers’ websites) when using DE.**

**We hope this helps with your problem.**

**Please be aware that there are many over-the-counter insecticides which are advertised as being effective against fleas. If you do decide to use them then please read the label and follow the instructions as careless use can be a risk to your health.**



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