



## Tips to Treat Fleas in Cats



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## Understanding Flea Bites

Housecats that go out on outside adventures often face a risk not just from larger predators such as dogs and coyotes, but are also exposed to various pollutants, insects, and fleas. In fact, fleas are one of the most recurrent issues in cats that can lead to physical ailments, discomfort, and even skin allergies. So, as a cat parent, it is important to understand flea

bites and check your furry munchkin for fleas from time to time.

## **Common Places to Find Fleas and How to Identify Them**

Fleas have a flat body and a grown flea can measure up to 3 mm in length. Fleas can be commonly found in places such as:

- **Yards and gardens**

These pests prefer a moist or humid environment with plenty of shades. So, they can be found in gardens or areas with shrubbery and tall grass, and can latch onto cats on adventures.

- **Inside the house**

in a household, fleas can be commonly found in damp and moist places, such as rugs or bedding. Floor cracks and furniture also serve as ideal nesting grounds for fleas.

## **Exploring the Reasons Behind Flea Bites**

Fleas derive their nutrients from the blood of other animals, such as cats and dogs. They latch on to the skin of their prey and bite to reach the blood vessels that lie within. Both male and female fleas bite not only to fulfil their nutritional requirements but also for reproduction. Having their nutritional requirements met, female fleas lay flea eggs on cats. Some flea larvae also feed on the blood content in adult flea poop. Flea bites are painful and can cause discoloured bumps and itchy skin.

## **Are Flea Bites Harmful to Humans?**

Although flea bites are considerably rare in humans, but they can cause significant pain and discomfort. Flea bites are characterised by a discoloured bump or ring around the bite and can develop into blisters or open sores and wounds. Severe cases of flea bites in humans can cause an infection leading to extreme pain, redness, and swollen glands. Flea bites in humans can also result in transmittable diseases like plague and typhus.

## **Effects of Flea Bites**

In addition to skin irritation, pain, and discomfort, flea bites in cats can also lead to severe effects. Apart from swellings, open sores, and lesions, fleas in cats also increase the risks of transmittable diseases like:

- **Anaemia**

Since flea bite cats to draw blood to feast on, it is a leading concern for anaemia in cats. Anaemia in cats can result in physical weakness and difficulty in breathing, lethargy, and can even lead to life-threatening severity if left untreated. Fleas in

kittens pose significant risks and may require professional attention.

- **Flea Allergy Dermatitis**

Flea allergy dermatitis or FAD in cats is an allergic reaction by the feline's immune system triggered by the protein present in the saliva of fleas. FAD in cats can cause significant discomfort and irritation which extends beyond the location of the flea bite. In advanced stages of FAD, cats may start showing symptoms like excessive shedding and loss of hair from the tail and inner thighs. Flea allergy in cats also result in small bumps and scabbing on the skin, open lesions, and skin infections.

- **Tapeworm infection**

Cats might end up grooming themselves excessively if they are suffering from flea bites, and ingest infected fleas in the process. Infected fleas can cause worms in cats through tape worms in cats where eggs to be released within the intestine or stomach.

Cats suffering from tape worms can display symptoms of worms in cats and digestive disorder caused by worms in cats, such as loss of appetite, frequent vomiting and diarrhoea, and physical weakness.

## **Why do Flea Bites Itch?**

When a flea in cat bites, it releases its salivary juice into the bloodstream of cats, which is a potential allergen and can trigger the cat's immune system. In order to remove the allergen from the body, the feline immune system releases histamine, which causes itching.

## **Signs That Your Cat Might Have Fleas**

The signs of a flea infestation are cats constantly scratching or grooming itself and small scabs and bumps on the skin. Excessive shedding and bald patches on their coats are symptoms of worms in cats too.

## **Symptoms of Flea Bite**

Mentioned below are some symptoms of flea bites and other ways that can help you find out if your precious fur baby is suffering from fleas:

- Flea bites can cause significant skin irritation, causing cats to endlessly scratch and bite themselves, and is a common symptom for flea bites.
- Flea bites can result in smaller bumps and scabs to appear on the neck and spinal area down to the base of a cat's tail.
- Thick fur in cats may make it difficult to check for fleas. An effective way of detecting fleas in cats with long hair is to use a flea comb to thoroughly brush their coat and inspect the content on the comb for white and black specks. Cats suffering from fleas can have flea faeces appear as black specks, and flea eggs on cats as white specks.

# Physical Characteristics of Fleas: What They Look Like

Cat flea bites have unique characteristics, such as small, discoloured bumps at the location of the bite, which can also develop discoloured rings around it. Although cat flea bites can cause inflammation, they do not swell up as much as mosquito bites. As fleas are likely to latch on to a cat in a group, fleas in cats bites can be noticed to appear in clusters or in a straight line. Cat flea bites are more commonly noticed in the belly, paws, loins, and inner thigh areas.

## Effective Remedies and Prevention Tips for Treating Flea Bites

Unless your cat is anaemic, cat flea bites do not often deteriorate to severe conditions, and are easily treatable with home remedies and worm medicine for cats. Here are some failsafe flea treatment for cats:

- Although it is difficult to prevent cat flea bites, if there are fleas in cats consider using commercial flea and tick preventives.
- Giving your cat or kitten a sulphur bath as a worm treatment for cats can be extremely helpful. Bathing your cat with flea and tick management shampoos is also effective as worm treatment for cats.
- Bathing your cat also helps in getting rid of oily accumulations on the skin that can attract fleas, worms in cats, and bacterial infestation.
- Consider grooming your furry with a flea comb at least on a weekly basis for flea checks.

## How to Treat Your Pet for Fleas?

Flea bites do not always require veterinary attention. Here are some helpful tips for treating your cat with at-home remedies and flea treatment for cats.

- Topical ointments, gels, sprays, and lotions can go a long way in treating flea bites and eliminating fleas and worms in cats.
- Applying aloe vera, honey, chamomile tea extracts, and ice are effective flea treatment for cats and can have a soothing effect over the concerned area.
- If your cat has an inflamed skin, over-the-counter flea medicine for cats such as Capster can help the swelling subside.
- Severe cases of flea bites, worms in cats and allergies can be treated with veterinary-approved flea medicine for cats like antihistamines, antibiotics, and steroids.
- Giving your cat or [kitten](#) a sulphur bath as a worm treatment for cats can be extremely helpful, which can help soothe skin irritations and other signs of worms in cats without having to resort to worm medicine for cats.
- For multi-cat households, consider treating all cats with flea treatment for cats to avoid the transmission.

## Tips for Treating Your Home for Fleas

Keeping your home clean can help in getting rid of flea larvae and flea eggs on cats. If your cat already has fleas, make immediate attempts to change its litter tray and bedding. Thoroughly washing their toys, blankets, and accessories can also help.

# Professional Flea Control Treatment

If home remedies do not work to remove the fleas from your furry munchkin's body, you should seek professional help. Professional flea control treatment consists of:

- Calamine or anaesthetic cream to sooth the itching
- Antihistamine to reduce the itchiness
- Antibiotic, if your cat has developed infection from all the scratching and biting
- Tapeworm medication, if your kitty shows the signs and symptoms of tapeworm infestation
- Topical solutions or powders to be applied on the fur of the feline or tablets for feeding to kill the fleas

To prevent fleas harming your cat again, you should also hire the assistance of pest control who can help to find the source and kind of fleas and get rid of them.

## FAQs

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1. Q:

### **What is spraying and marking in cats?**

A:

Male cats spraying is considered a vital part of feline communication. While most outdoor cats spray to mark territories, spraying in household cats is more instinctive. Female cat spraying and urine marking in cats are also for attracting mates.

2. Q:

### **Do cats spray when happy?**

A:

While spraying can have several connotations, it does not generally indicate happiness in cats. Cat urine spraying is usually used for urine marking in cats to indicate territories, warding off predators, and attracting potential mates when in heat.

3. Q:

### **How do I get my cat to stop spraying?**

A:

Since male cats spraying is mostly associated with non-neutered cats looking for a mate in heat, getting your cat spayed or neutered is a possible long-term solution. Additionally, veterinarians may recommend medications like Fluoxetine or Clomipramine with a high success rate.

4. Q:

## **Is cat spraying the same as peeing?**

A:

Cat parents often wonder, why do cats spray? Contrary to popular belief, cat peeing and spraying are not the same. While cat pee involves your furry relieving itself, cat spray is more intentional to communicate certain things like marking territories.

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