

MYTH BUSTERS: Fleas & Ticks

MYTH: Fleas jump from one pet to another.

FACT: Fleas don't jump between pets. Fleas jump onto the pet from a hotspot, such as the home, backyard or park. Once a flea jumps onto a dog or cat, it depends on that animal for survival.



MYTH: Indoor pets can't get fleas.

FACT: There are several ways indoor-only pets can get fleas. Fleas can hitchhike on people and come into the home. Untreated pets that visit the home can leave flea eggs behind when they leave. Untreated neighbourhood pets and urban wildlife are a common source of flea eggs for establishing a flea 'hotspot'.

MYTH: Fleas in the home are a sign of a dirty house.

FACT: Fleas hitch a ride on a person or pet and begin the life cycle in your home. Fleas don't care how clean you keep your home.

MYTH: If the pet owner sees fleas or ticks on the pet, the control product isn't working.

FACT: Pets can easily pick up new fleas or ticks, but if control products are applied appropriately, they will kill the fleas/ticks. Flea infestations are very difficult to eradicate and it can take several weeks until fleas are eliminated from both the pet and the environment. A large flea biomass can result in surges of fleas that keep emerging, even when the pet has been treated with a flea control product.

MYTH: Once the fleas are controlled, pet owners can stop applying flea control.

FACT: As long as the pet continues to come in contact with a flea infestation site, the pet owner will see fleas on the pet.

MYTH: Flea control products are not needed in the winter.

FACT: The experts recommend year-round flea control because fleas can lay dormant in the winter and emerge on the first nice day, hungry and ready for a blood meal. Furthermore, even in winter, there are microenvironments-such as indoors-that can sustain the flea life cycle.

MYTH: Pet owners should put the pet outside when there is a flea infestation.

FACT: New fleas will continue to emerge in the house, even if the pet is outside and instead of jumping on the pet (their preferred host) they will jump onto people.

MYTH: Ticks can fly or jump onto the host.

FACT: Ticks cannot fly or jump. Ticks 'quest', which means that they crawl up leaves or vegetation and wait for a host to pass, then climb onto the host. Ticks in New Zealand are more commonly found on 'rougher' pasture.

