



Question of the Week

Q. Help! Fleas from my cat and dog have infested my house.

A. Fleas are small, wingless insects that feed on the blood of animals and people. They can survive for weeks away from a host without feeding. During the summer you may choose to control fleas in your yard, but the approach of cold weather makes this step unnecessary. An integrated indoor flea control program includes good sanitation and treatment of both your pet(s) and the environment.

Change pet bedding regularly and vacuum thoroughly. Vacuum under furniture, cushions and beds, and along the edges of walls. Seal vacuum cleaner bags in plastic bags and discard with the trash. This prevents fleas from continuing to develop inside the vacuum cleaner bags and re-infesting the house.

Treat your pets to a good bath and a flea comb. Flea combs have fine teeth that remove adult fleas from fur. Pay special attention to the face, neck, and the area in front of the tail. While combing, dip the comb frequently in soapy water or an alcohol solution to kill the fleas you remove from the pet. Contact your veterinarian for information about medications that control fleas on your pet.

If you have a heavy infestation, you may want to treat your home with an approved insecticide. Always read and follow label directions on the insecticide container. The most effective formulations contain both an adulticide (e.g., permethrin), effective against the biting adult stage, and an insect growth regulator (methoprene) to provide long-term suppression of the eggs, larvae and pupae. Contact a licensed pesticide applicator for professional indoor or outdoor flea control.

Got questions? UNH Cooperative Extension's Family, Home & Garden Education Center Info Line offers practical help finding answers for your lawn and garden questions. Call toll free at 1-877-398-4769, M-F, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., or e-mail us at answers@unh.edu