

# { LIFE CYCLE: *Fleas*

**A**ny pet owner who's had trouble with fleas on their dog or cat knows how quickly an infestation of these pint-sized pests can spiral out of control. But how does it go from one flea to hundreds—even thousands—so quickly?

Here's a breakdown of the flea life cycle from egg to adult:

**1. Egg.** Eggs are deposited on the pet and fall into the environment within a few hours.

**2. Larva.** Larvae are maggot-like and approximately 0.5 cm long. They feed on blood in adult flea feces, organic debris, flea eggshells and other flea larvae.

> Flea larvae develop outdoors in cool, shady areas where pets rest as well as indoors in undisturbed, protected sites such as in carpet, under furniture and along baseboards.

**3. Pupa.** Whitish cocoons can be found in soil, on vegetation, in carpets, under furniture and on animal bedding.

> Adults emerge about eight days after formation of the cocoon. All fleas usually emerge by day 13, depending on temperature and relative humidity.

**4. Adult.** Adults begin feeding immediately when on a pet—usually within three minutes.

> Egg production begins within 20 to 24 hours of females taking their first blood meal.

> Female fleas can produce 40 to 50 eggs per day—that's nearly 3,000 fleas in two months!

> During the warm summer months, the entire flea life cycle can be completed in two to three weeks.

