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# Vector Spotlight Fleas

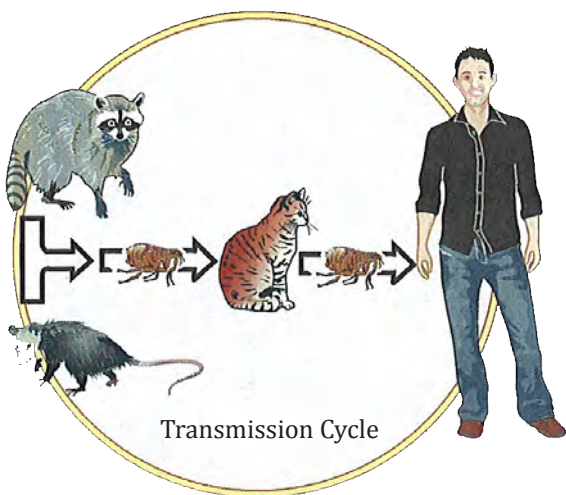


## General Information

Wherever dogs, cats or other pet mammals are allowed inside the house, fleas may become a problem. Fleas can bite humans as well as domestic animals. This vector requires animal or human blood in order to breed and survive.

## Health Risks: Flea-borne Typhus

Adult fleas can inflict painful and itching bites. The discomfort of the bite may last from several days to a week. In addition to biting, fleas can also transmit flea-borne typhus. Flea-borne typhus is caused by bacteria found in some fleas and their feces. The bacteria are transmitted from the female fleas to their offspring and also transmitted to host animals through bites.



### What are the symptoms?

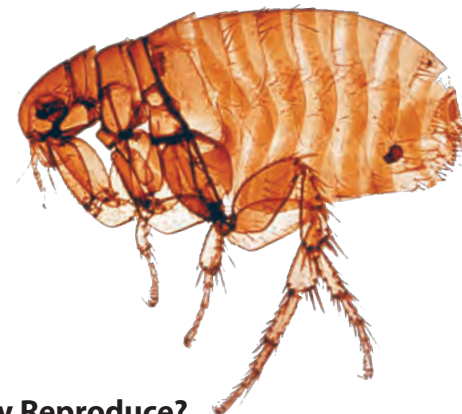
Symptoms can begin from one to two weeks after exposure and can include: fever, headache, chills, body aches and pains, and rashes. Many cases require hospitalization.

### How is Flea-borne Typhus Treated?

The disease is treated with antibiotic therapy.

### How Have People Contributed to the Spread of This Disease?

When people introduce non-native opossums, cats and rats, they help flea-borne typhus spread. Leaving pet food out at night can also attract animals that may carry the disease. This occurs frequently near businesses and residential communities.



## How Do They Reproduce?

Fleas need blood to produce eggs. The female flea usually lays her eggs on the pet (cat or dog). The eggs eventually fall off and hatch in places where the pet spends most of its time indoors. These places may include the sofa, carpet and the pet's bed. The larvae of fleas that hatch from the eggs will usually mature in about two weeks. Larvae can be found in cracks in the floor and other hiding places. A home may become heavily infested with developing larvae before the infestation is noticed!

## I Found Fleas! What do I do?

The first step is to make sure to put your pet(s) on a flea control program. Consult your veterinarian for advice.

Inside your home, begin cleaning infested rooms by vacuuming the carpet, baseboards and upholstered furniture. Then wet mop bare floors with hot water and soap. This will help get rid of eggs and larvae. After cleaning, you may apply insecticides designed for flea control in your home and on your pet. Be sure to follow the product label's instructions!

Fleas outside your home can be controlled by removing dense vegetation and applying appropriate insecticides. The key to successfully controlling fleas is to maintain a clean environment.

Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District

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