

Spring signals return of dangerous pet parasites

April 3 2015, by Greg McClure

Warm weather and longer days mean many pets and their owners will be spending more time outside. Spring also brings the return of fleas that can pose as dangerous parasites to pets.

With an ability to reproduce in large numbers in a very short period of time, fleas should be one of a [pet owner's](#) top concerns with the start of warmer weather, says Lorraine Corriveau, a pet wellness [veterinarian](#) in Purdue's College of Veterinary Medicine. Not only do they cause irritation to pets, but they also are capable of spreading a number of serious diseases.

So, what should be done to help rid pets of these pests?

"Knowing the flea life cycle is one of the best advantages that pet owners can have," Corriveau says. "Fleas go through a four-stage life cycle that can be completed in as little as 14 days, given the right conditions. Attacking various stages of this life cycle will help to speed up the demise of the parasites and bring a level of relief to your itchy pet."

While there are many flea products available, Corriveau says most of them will kill only the adult flea.

"Only about 5 percent of the total flea population is present as adult fleas on your pet. The other 95 percent (eggs, larva and cocoons/pupae) are scattered throughout the pet's environment," she says. "In all likelihood, this environment includes the owner's house, furniture and, possibly,

even the owner's bed!"

Corriveau says pet owners should consult with their veterinarian to determine the best strategy for eliminating fleas.

"Veterinarians have access to a variety of flea control products that will not only help rid your pet of adult [fleas](#), but also help you break the [life cycle](#) and stop any potential re-infestation. Your veterinarian also will be able to make sure that any products you choose are safe and appropriate for your family as well as your [pet](#)."

Provided by Purdue University

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