

PUBLIC PROTECTION – ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

Pest advice - Fleas

What do they look like?

Adult fleas are normally 1 – 4mm long, brownish in colour with powerful legs adapted for jumping. Female fleas can live up to two years, during which time they can lay up to 1000 eggs.



Where do they live?

Adult fleas live exclusively as parasites of warm-blooded animals. The females lay their eggs close to, or on the infested animal. Wall to wall carpeting and soft furnishings also provide a relatively undisturbed environment for fleas to develop. They can also live in cracks and crevices in bare floors.

What do they eat?

Larvae feed on debris and adult flea droppings. Adult fleas feed solely on blood.

Pest status:

Disease transmission – Fleas are not thought to transmit any serious illnesses to humans.

Flea bites – Although not all people are affected by flea bites, they can cause severe irritation.

Control: Hygiene – Regular cleaning, particularly with a vacuum cleaner, will help prevent the build up of infestation by removing eggs and larvae from floors, furniture and where pets sleep.

Treatment of pets – In order to achieve effective control, pets must also be treated with a product approved for veterinary use.

Chemical – The standard treatment for infested premises is the application of a residual insecticide, either as a powder or a liquid spray. The insecticide is applied to all floor surfaces and these areas must not be vacuumed or washed for at least 10 days after the treatment, or longer if possible. Always follow instructions on the label.

Patience – Although new adult fleas may still be emerging from cocoons up to a month after treatment, there should still be sufficient insecticide to kill them off.

Professional help & advice

Powys County Council no longer provides a service for the control of fleas. Commercial pest control companies are listed on the internet, in the Yellow Pages and Thompson's Local Directory.