

*****IMPORTANCE OF PARASITE CONTROL*****

(Fleas and Worms)

What you should know about fleas and the problems they cause:

- The most common flea found on cats is the cat flea.
- Fleas can cause a flea allergy on cats and dogs which can be painful and causes loss of fur just above the tail is a common place – FAD Flea Allergy Dermatitis. FAD can cause raised bumps and scabs on the skin.
- Fleas carry the larval stage of tape worm. The cat can ingest fleas whilst grooming and thus cause a tape worm infestation.
- Fleas feed on blood and can cause anaemia and weakness especially in young kittens or the older geriatric cats which can lead to death.
- Fleas can also serve as carriers of zoonotic diseases to humans through biting.
- Fleas can live off a host for up to 6 months and have a life cycle of 2 years.

Does my cat have fleas:

- The cat scratches incessantly under the chin, bites around the back area and stomach.
- The owner has bites on the ankles.
- Comb the cat with a flea comb on a white towel or sheet. Flea dirt or faeces will come off as black particles, if you put these particles onto damp cotton wool and it dissolves into blood, the cat has fleas.
- Check the cats bedding for flea dirt.

Combating fleas in the home:

- Vacuum clean all carpets, skirting boards, soft furnishings and curtains thoroughly.
- Remove and wash your own bedding as well as the pets bedding thoroughly.
- Treat the entire house with a product that is specially produced for flea eradication but does not harm your cat. More than one treatment in the house may be required.
- On the same day that your house is treated, ensure that all the cats are treated. I recommend giving the cat a Capstar tablet which gets into the blood stream and kills all fleas within 30 minute and then treat with an appropriate top spot flea treatment. Ensure that the manufacturer's directions are strictly followed for the safety of the animal.
- Maintain a regular tick and flea treatment program for your cat eg. once every 4 weeks is the norm for most products.
- **WARNING:** Never use products manufactured for dogs on cats, this can cause poisoning and death.

What you should know about worms and the problems they cause:

- Worms are intestinal parasites. Common types: round worms, hook worms, tape worms and lung worms. The tapeworm is transmitted via fleas so it is imperative to treat for worms and fleas.

Does my cat have worms:

- Check the cat's faeces for worms. Worms can cause diarrhea, constipation, vomiting and can also be seen around the anus looking like grains of rice.

Prevention:

- Ensure that litter trays are kept clean and the sand is changed regularly.
- Liaise with your vet and get a worm treatment that takes care of all worm types.
- Kittens should be treated frequently from 6 weeks for round worms. Adult cats should be treated every two to three months for worms. My recommendation is to do a flea treatment and worm treatment on the same day.