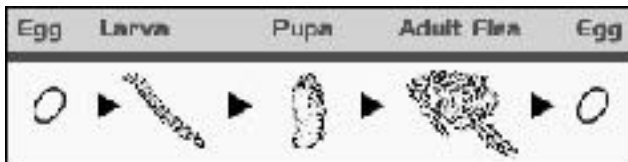


# ANIMAL MEDICAL CENTER OF LEHIGH ACRES

## IMPORTANT FLEA FACTS!

- **Where Fleas Hide:** Fleas eggs, larvae and pupae can hide in a number of flea-friendly locations around your home like furniture, carpeting and shaded areas. These are also the same places your dog or cat spends most of its time.
- **Flea Life Cycle:** The flea life cycle can be as short as a few weeks or can last several months – usually 3-4 weeks in this area. Here are the four stages of a fleas development.



An adult female flea lays about 50 eggs a day, about 2000 in her lifetime! Adult fleas live on pets and lay eggs only when they are on animals. Eggs fall off pets and hatch into larvae. Larvae develop into pupae and are protected by a cocoon which makes this stage most difficult to eliminate.

**The adults you may see comprise only 5% of the population.** 50% is eggs, 35% is larva, and 10% is pupa.

**Fleas** may be a year-round problem in South Florida.

### Flea Infestation Warning Signs

Be aware of the following warning signs that indicate the presence of fleas on your dog:

**Black specks-** Black specks on your dog or in your dog's bed could be what are commonly called "flea dirt," which is actually adult flea feces.

**Agitation and scratching-** Dogs infested with fleas may become unusually nervous and agitated and will scratch excessively.

### Flea-Bite-Related Illnesses

Fleas are responsible for flea allergy dermatitis, or FAD, and anemia.

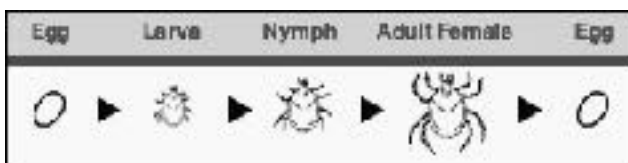
**Flea Allergy Dermatitis (FAD)-** Your dog may develop FAD as a reaction to the small amount of saliva fleas leave in the skin after biting an animal. Dogs suffering from FAD scratch and bite excessively around the tail, groin, or backside and may also develop scabs or bumps on the neck or back. Sometimes fleas may not be seen because the pet may be ingesting them through biting or grooming. Pets may develop skin infections secondary to the scratching and require antibiotics.

**Anemia-** Puppies, older dogs, and dogs with pre-existing illnesses maybe susceptible to flea-bite-induced anemia. Symptoms include pale gums, weakness and lethargy.

### Ticks

Ticks attach to dogs to feed. You might not even notice these minute pests on your dog until the ticks have fed so much that they've become engorged. Worse yet, ticks may transmit diseases that can cause potentially serious dog-health problems.

- **Tick Life Cycle:** A tick's existence is a hungry and hardy one. They can actually live for several years. Take a look below to follow the surprisingly long life cycle of a tick!



### **Tick-Borne Diseases Can Affect Your Dog's Health**

Tick-borne diseases such as Lyme disease, ehrlichiosis, and Rocky Mountain spotted fever can vary in severity from mild to fatal in dogs.

- Lyme disease in dogs can be characterized by fever and lameness and they may become chronic. Neurological, cardiac, kidney, and reproductive signs may also occur. The deer tick is a vector which may carry Lyme disease.
- Ehrlichiosis in dogs is typically characterized by an acute phase that may be followed by a chronic phase. Signs may include: loss of appetite, depression, stiffness, coughing, difficulty breathing, and swelling of the scrotum or limbs. Dogs can recover spontaneously or the disease may become chronic and may affect the dog's bone marrow and organs. Signs are consistent with the particular organs affected. A principal vector is the brown dog tick.
- Rocky Mountain spotted fever (also called tick fever) in dogs typically affects dogs that are outdoors frequently. Signs may include: fever, loss of appetite, arthritis, coughing, difficulty breathing, and swelling of the face or extremities. Neurological and vascular signs may also occur. The disease is transmitted by the American dog tick.

### **Topical Protection**

There are many products available to help keep these "bug's" at bay. For strictly a flea infestation Advantage may be the best choice. If you are dealing with both fleas and ticks the products you may wish to consider would be Frontline, K9 Advantix, or Revolution. For more information on these products just ask for the product handout.