

## FLEA CONTROL

### How do dogs and cats get fleas?

Fleas are parasites that live in the environment, virtually anywhere in the world. The adult flea bites the pet, and then lays eggs, which fall off the pet into the carpet or bedding. Once off the dog, the eggs hatch and larvae emerge. They then form into cocoon-like structures called pupae. If environmental conditions are not favorable, the pupae can remain dormant for several months, even years. When the temperature and humidity are favorable, the pupae hatch into adult fleas. The adult flea then jumps onto a dog or cat, bites, and the cycle starts all over again.

### Are fleas a problem year round?

YES!! For the past year, western Washington has been experiencing SEVERE flea infestations. Many of our clients are reporting flea problems for the first time, and we are continuing to see active fleas on pets even in the coldest winter months.

**We recommend applying flea control once monthly on all pets year round.**

### How can we prevent fleas?

There are several products on the market that are very effective at controlling fleas.

**Advantage and Frontline** are both topical medications that are applied to the back of the neck once monthly. They spread across the entire body of the pet and kill all adult fleas within 24 hours. The medications do not enter the blood stream, and the flea does not have to bite the pet in order for the medication to work. Both medications act at two different points in the life cycle:

- Frontline kills adult fleas and the eggs that are in the environment, and also kills ticks.
- Advantage kills adult fleas and larvae that are in the environment.

**Program** is an oral medication that does not kill the adult flea, but prevents the adults from laying eggs. The flea must bite the pet in order for it to work.

***\*\*All of these medications are very safe and non-toxic to people and pets, with few to zero possible reactions\*\****

### What flea medication is best for my pet?

Indoor only cats: Advantage, Frontline, or Program

Indoor/outdoor cats: Advantage or Frontline

Dogs that go hunting/camping: Frontline (for flea and tick control)

Dogs that swim several times a month: Program year round, add Advantage or Frontline in the summer (the topical meds can wash off.)

Dogs with any other lifestyle: Advantage or Frontline

### Do I also need to treat my house to control fleas?

Some severe flea problems will require treatment of the environment, such as carpet and pet bedding. A thorough vacuuming of carpets and washing of pet bedding with hot water will help to remove eggs and larvae. You can also use products such as Knockout spray on areas of heavy pet use. There is a commercial company called Fleabusters that can provide additional prevention and control.