

## Fleas

These little pests can be found on almost any pet, and under the right conditions, at any time of the year.

Adult fleas live, feed, and mate on our pets; the female flea lays eggs that fall off into the environment where they hatch into larvae. The larvae eat organic debris until they mature into pupae. The pupae may lie dormant for weeks to months, awaiting the ideal environmental conditions before hatching into adults. Newly hatched adult fleas jump onto a host animal to complete their life cycle. Two days after eating a blood meal from the host, the female flea begins to lay eggs. Under ideal conditions, the flea can complete its entire life cycle in as little as two weeks; in adverse conditions, the cycle can take as much as a year.

The main source of a flea infestation is a newly emerged adult flea brought into your house on either one of your pets, or even you!

To get rid of them, you will have to treat every one of your pets, as well as your home. Speak with your veterinarian about what products are right for you and your pet.

## Ticks

Due to the temperate weather here on Vancouver Island, ticks are active all year round.

They are parasites that feed on the blood of their host, which can be animal or human. They are efficient disease carriers, and should be promptly removed once found.

We recommend checking your pets over after they have been outside, especially if they were in tall grass or a wooded area. Run your hands all over their back, belly, legs and head checking for small bumps.

If you find a tick, put on gloves before removing it. Using a tick twister, tweezers or your fingers, grasp

the tick as close to the surface of the skin as possible, and pull out with a steady, even pressure. It may take some time for the tick to release its grasp on your pet, so don't give up. Once it's removed wash your hands and disinfect the bite area.

Speak with your veterinarian about preventative medication.

## Worms

There are many types of internal parasites that can infect your pet. While they can be a problem at any age, they are especially harmful to young animals, causing issues like anemia, poor growth and intestinal obstruction.

Roundworms do not require an immediate host to spread, and are transmitted by ingesting eggs that are passed through the feces of an infected animal. Hookworms attach to the lining of the small intestine where it feeds on blood. They can cause severe anemia. The larvae can enter your pet by the mouth or through the skin, especially through the paws. They can cause eczema and secondary infections from irritation as they burrow in the skin.

Tapeworms do require an intermediate host. The host of the most common type of tapeworm (*Dipylidium*) is the flea. Your pet gets this type of tapeworm from eating an infected Flea.

If you notice rice like white spots, or long flat spaghetti like strings in your pet's feces, speak to your veterinarian about deworming medication.

## Mites

The most common type of mite we see in our area are ear mites in kittens. These can be easily treated with medications. If you notice your pet scratching at their ears more than usual, speak with your veterinarian. They can recommend medication, or testing.