



## FLEA ALLERGY DERMATITIS

### ABOUT THE DISEASE

**Flea allergy dermatitis (FAD)** is an inflammatory condition of the skin that affects both canine and feline patients when they are bitten by one or multiple fleas. The allergy is caused by the flea's saliva and not every patient will react as mildly or severely as the next. If a patient is more allergic, they can develop severe itchiness (pruritus) anywhere on the body, regardless of where the flea bite occurred. As few as one or two flea bites every week can be enough to trigger and perpetuate an allergic reaction to cause near-constant itching.

### OBTAINING A DIAGNOSIS

Patients are often diagnosed based on the patient's symptoms, presence of fleas in the hair coat, and improvement of the animal's symptoms with treatment.

Blood testing and intradermal (inside the skin) testing exists to diagnose a flea bite allergy, but these tests are not 100% accurate.

Patients should be screened for other types of allergic skin diseases or those conditions which cause pruritus.

### TREATMENT

The most effective treatment is an effective monthly ectoparasite (flea and tick) prevention regimen. While many ectoparasite preventatives exist on the market, not all are safe and effective. Only apply those medications that are directed by a veterinarian. Almost all veterinary recommended medications are available online with a prescription, so be cautious when purchasing over-the-counter flea and tick prevention.

With newer-age medications, it is no longer necessary to "bomb" houses with insecticides. Several months of concurrent use with an approved topical medication in conjunction with regular cleaning of the environment, can clear an infestation.

### TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Consult with a veterinarian before placing any medication on your patient to treat or prevent flea infestations.
- DO NOT USE PERMETHRIN- OR PYRETHROID-BASED PREVENTATIVES ON FELINE PATIENTS.