

Flea Season Continues as Summer's End Draws Near

Year-round flea treatment is recommended in several regions of the country to keep fleas at bay; immature fleas can lie dormant for months - both indoors and outdoors.

Posted: September 1, 2007 5 a.m. EDT

Commonly thought of as a summer problem because fleas thrive in warm and wet weather, the parasites can be a year-round threat due to seasonal weather fluctuations. And indoor locations may provide optimum living conditions for fleas when outdoor weather cools off. To defend cats from infestations, the Companion Animal Parasite Council recommends year-round flea control.

Adult fleas live their entire lives on pets, however flea eggs may fall from pets onto the floor and furniture where tiny larvae hatch and burrow themselves into those areas, according to the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). The flea then spins itself a cocoon where it can lie dormant for weeks before maturing and seeking refuge on a pet. The entire flea life cycle lasts between 12 days and six months, the AVMA says.

To help keep fleas at bay, Bayer Animal Health released several tips to reduce the possibility of flea infestation:

- * Wash cat bedding
- * Keep furniture clean
- * Vacuum rugs and carpets
- * Thoroughly treat areas frequented by pets with fleas

Signs of flea infestation can range from mild redness to heavy scratching that may lead to skin infections, the AVMA says. Regular cleaning helps kill all stages of fleas, but more severe infestations may require outdoor treatments.