



MIDFOREST
veterinary practice

Spring is a time of new life and this is especially so as regards fleas, the problems that many pets and their owners experience in the summer begin unseen in the Spring. The trap is that for the Spring months there are only a few fleas around and so are not noticed, neither visibly or through the pet scratching. But all the time those few fleas are laying eggs, up to 80 a day and so as time ticks by the unseen enemy is massing in carpets and bedding. The eggs hatch into a larval caterpillar stage that feeds off the tiny flakes of skin that fall off our pets and more significantly us, then they form chrysalises which just wait Come the sudden rise in temperatures around the end of June the chrysalises start to hatch, in the words of Russell Crow in *Gladiator*, on my command unleash hell, thousands of fleas burst forth at once and suddenly you have an infestation.

Infestations are hard to crack, starting treatment once the problem is apparent is like turning back the tide. Treating the animal will kill fleas but they are immediately replaced by newly hatching chrysalis stages so that any time you look you will see fleas present. Also the newly hatching fleas are desperate for food and this is the time that the human occupants of the house can be bitten. To make matters worse, the chrysalis stage is very difficult to kill, when the flea hatches it waits for something warm and moving to come near and it literally explodes out of its capsule using its famous ability to jump and fires itself at the target. No matter if the carpet has been sprayed with insecticide, the flea will sail clean over the top of it.

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