

# Your handy guide to common pests

Do you know which parasites are most likely to affect your cat? Learn more about where to spot them, the threats they pose, and how you can prevent them



## 1. Fleas

The tiny, brown-black adult flea feeds from your pet by sucking its blood. Many cats are highly allergic to flea saliva, suffering from itching, skin inflammation and small scabs on the skin.

Fleas are usually easy to spot. If you're not sure whether your cat has them, try grooming him or her with a fine-toothed comb over a moist, white kitchen towel. If reddish-brown dots drop from the comb onto the towel, your cat is likely to have fleas (these dots are fleas' faeces).

Your vet can advise you on a safe and effective treatment. You will also need to spray and vacuum your house thoroughly to prevent fleas coming back, especially areas where your cat plays and sleeps.

Prevention is much easier than dealing with an established infestation, so make sure all cats and dogs in the household are regularly dosed with a good-quality flea treatment.



## 2. Ticks

Ticks are blood-sucking parasites that attach themselves to your cat's skin. Look out for them between the toes, under the front legs, in the groin area, under the tail or even on eyelids. It's important to remove ticks promptly, as they can pass on unwanted disease and may cause an allergic reaction where they attach.

Removing ticks safely is harder than it sounds, and is best done with a tick-removing tool. Otherwise the head can remain embedded in your cat's skin. Your vet can help you with this and recommend a preventative product.



## 3. Mites

Ear mites are spread by direct contact with another cat, or via infected bedding.

Mites irritate the inside of a cat's ear, so if your pet flicks his or her ears frequently or has a lot of earwax, they may be suffering from ear mites.

If you're concerned, then take your cat to see the vet, as he or she can treat and control mite infestations.

## Remember...

If you suspect that your cat has any of these parasites, speak to your vet straight away. They'll be able to recommend the best course of treatment and ensure your pet isn't suffering from any nasty side effects, such as skin infections



## 4. Worms

Most worms make their home in your cat's intestinal tract. The most common types include:

**Roundworms** Common in kittens or cats that have never been dewormed, as they can be transferred in a mother cat's milk.

**Hookworms** A type of roundworm, these small worms are transferred via contaminated water or soil, and can be dangerous to young animals.

**Tapeworms** Tapeworm eggs are passed to cats via fleas and vermin they have eaten.

You won't normally be able to spot an adult worm, but you might notice symptoms that could point to them – such as diarrhoea, dry, coarse fur and weight loss. Worm-related disease can pose a risk to humans, especially to children, so prompt treatment is key. However, many cats don't show any outward signs, so regular preventative treatment is best. From six weeks old, cats need deworming against roundworms (including hookworms) monthly. And from six months old, treatment for roundworms and tapeworms is required every three months.

