

Flea Allergy Dermatitis



Flea allergy dermatitis (or FAD) is a term used to describe the itchy, scabby dermatitis (skin inflammation/infection) that some cats develop when bitten by fleas. These cats are allergic to the saliva of fleas and even one flea bite can result in a body-wide reaction.

Why should I worry about FAD?

Cats with FAD often require additional veterinary care to resolve the allergic reaction and heal the dermatitis. Without care, cats often injure themselves while scratching, and the generalized skin issues can lead to other health issues, like a weakened immune system and weight loss. There is no cure for FAD, but diligent flea control does minimize the chance of a flare up and prompt veterinary care when a flare up is seen limits the reaction.



How can I tell if my cat has FAD?

FAD is usually seen in cats with flea infestations and causes small, red, scabby lesions on the skin with the most intense lesions around the head, neck, and along the back. The lesions are extremely itchy and cats may injure themselves through scratching. Because other diseases can cause similar signs, the best way to tell if your cat has FAD is to see your veterinarian.



How can I help my cat with FAD?

Preventing flea bites through diligent flea prevention is the very best thing to do for cats with FAD. If you suspect your cat has FAD, starting a flea preventative right away will help prevent further discomfort and is the first step in resolving a flare up. See your veterinarian for additional care and be sure to treat all animals in the household for fleas.

Most cats with severe dermatitis will need immediate flea control and additional veterinary care to control the allergic reaction so, FCSNP recommends working with your veterinarian to make a plan that is right for you and your pet.

How can FCSNP help at the time of surgery?

If signs of FAD are seen at surgery, FCSNP staff will inform caregivers. If requested at check in, FCSNP can apply a topical flea preventative (Revolution) at the time of surgery.

Revolution: a topical flea preventative that kills fleas already on the pet and provides 30 days of flea protection. FCSNP can apply this medication at the time of surgery only, if requested. Please see your regular veterinarian for continuing flea control.

