

You and Your Pet

Understanding zoonotic diseases

Are you playing host to your dog's fleas?

A hug a day keeps the doctor away— not necessarily so. While most pet owners don't hesitate to let their pet sleep on their bed or lie on the couch beside them, most probably don't realize that if a parasite is living with your pet it may also see you as a potential host.

Zoonosis is likely not a term pet owners hear every day but it's one they should become familiar with. Zoonosis is the process by which certain diseases can be transmitted from animals to humans. It originates from the Greek word elements "zoo" for animal and "nosos" for disease. Zoonotic diseases can result in a variety of health problems in animals as well as humans.

Types of zoonotic diseases

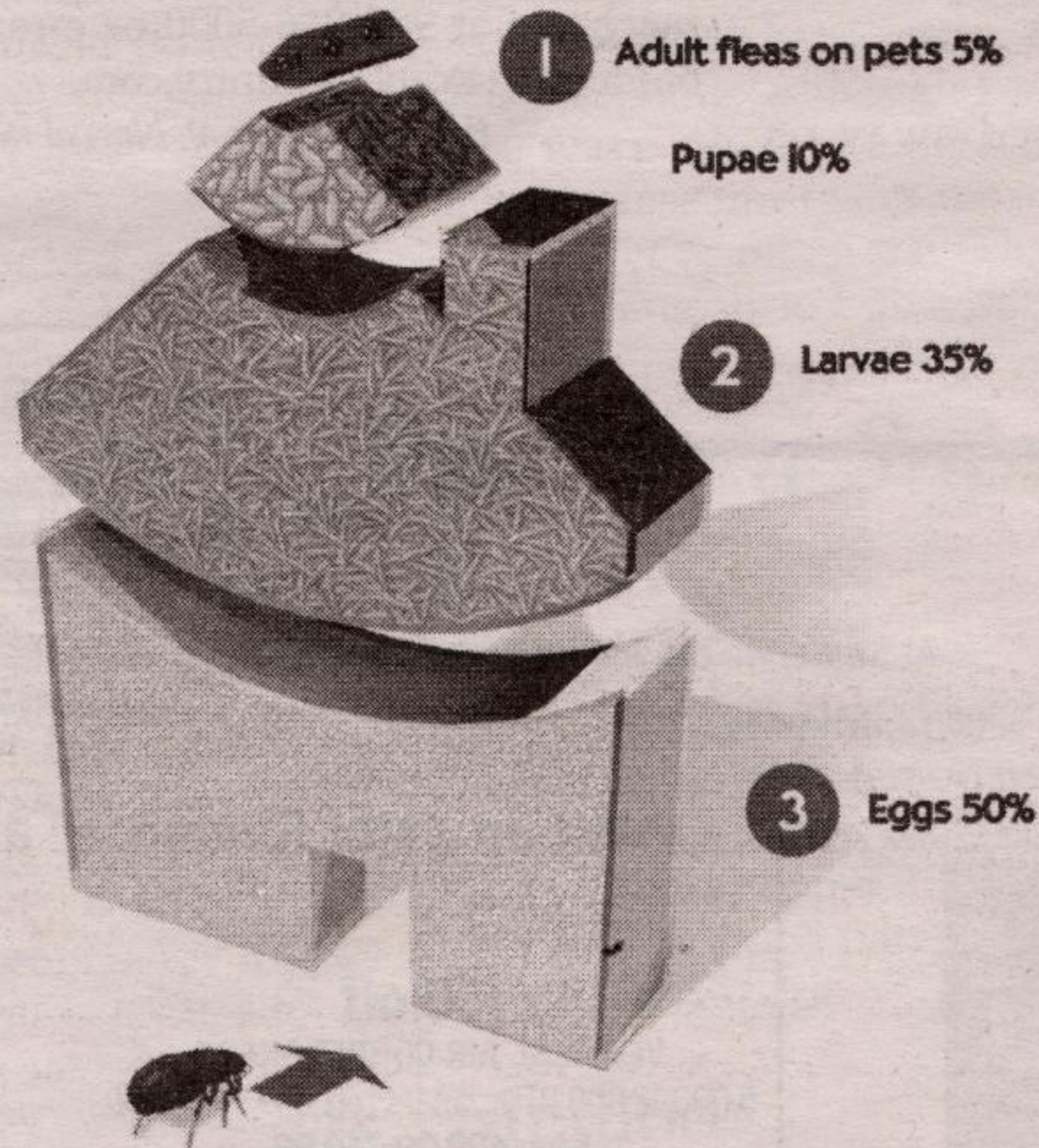
Fleas and Sarcoptic mange (scabies) can produce red, itchy skin rashes in humans. Sarcoptic mange can affect all breeds of dogs, from puppies to seniors. Microscopic mites tunnel into dog's skin to live and lay eggs causing an uncomfortable skin condition characterized by severe itching. This highly contagious skin disease can be easily transmitted to other dogs, cats and even humans. Sudden itching, scratching or biting around the face, ears, chest, legs, elbows or hocks; hair loss in affected areas; small bumps on the skin or crusty, yellow scabs are all indicators of possible mange infestation.

Flea bites can cause itchy skin in both dogs and cats, leading your pet to unusual amounts of scratching, licking or chewing, head shaking and visible skin irritation or inflammation.

Fleas thrive in warm temperatures and moist conditions and have an uncanny ability to survive.

Each adult female flea lays an average of 27 eggs a day on your pet, most of which fall off your pet's coat wherever they may travel— on the carpets, furniture or pet bedding. Eggs then hatch into small, white larvae within 2 to 7 days of being laid. Just a few adult fleas can quickly produce hundreds more.

Just a few adult fleas on your pet can mean hundreds more in your home.



A walk in the park can bring home new fleas.

Flea larvae live in dark places, such as carpets and pet bedding and feed on organic matter— feces of adult fleas. Larvae continue to grow and shed their hard, outer shells over a 9 to 21 day period before producing a silky-white cocoon. While in the cocoon, the developing flea is protected from harsh environments, including flea insecticides.

The adult flea emerges from the cocoon in search of a blood meal when the environmental conditions are warm and moist— just right for their survival. The adult fleas then live on your pet, feeding on its blood and pro-

ducing more eggs to repeat the life cycle.

Hookworms can affect cats of any age causing severe intestinal damage. Cats can get hookworms when they eat contaminated food such as mice and other rodents or they can penetrate through the skin. Kittens may also pick up hookworms through their mother's milk. If you notice a change in your pet's appetite, dry cough, pale gums, dark tarry stools, constipation or diarrhea, take your cat to the vet. Hookworms can also affect humans and cause skin rash.

Roundworms affect cats and can also be transmitted through mother's milk. Like hookworms, roundworms are transmitted by eating contaminated food such as rodents. Roundworms are the most common intestinal worm and interfere with digestion and absorption of nutrients. Symptoms to look for: dull coat, bloated stomach, vomiting or presence of adult worms in stools, diarrhea, coughing and loss of appetite. Roundworms can also affect humans if they are accidentally ingested, especially by children.

It's important to protect your pets against parasites for their sake as well as your family's. Revolution, a topical solution, helps make the prevention of zoonotic diseases easier than ever— just a few drops once a month is all it takes. And it's safe to use on puppies and kittens as young as six weeks of age, as well as breeding and lactating cats and dogs.

Simply part the hair on the base of the neck, in front of the shoulder blades until the skin is visible. Squeeze the low-volume, non-greasy solution of the tube directly on the skin where it will be quickly absorbed into the bloodstream and circulated through the bloodstream to effectively control internal parasites such as hookworms and roundworms. Then, it persists throughout the month to control external parasites such as fleas.

Given once a month, this product effectively controls a number of zoonotic diseases, as well as ear mites. Consult your veterinarian for more information on how to protect all of your family from zoonotic diseases.

— News Canada

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