



CAT FLEAS: FACT OR FEAR?



WHAT THE TEXAS STUDY REALLY FOUND

Let's separate the science from the sensationalism
and get **the facts**.

✓ THE FACTS ABOUT THE STUDY

- Researchers in South Texas tested fleas collected from stray and free-roaming cats.
- They found that about 4% of the fleas carried the bacteria *Rickettsia typhi*, which causes murine (flea-borne) typhus.
- This study shows the bacteria is circulating in flea populations in the region—it does not mean most fleas or cats are infected.



🐈 CATS ARE NOT THE SOURCE



Cats do NOT transmit murine typhus to people.



You cannot catch it from petting, cuddling, or living with your cat.



Cats are one host among many in a much larger flea and wildlife cycle.

🐕 HOW PEOPLE GET INFECTED

Fleas don't usually pass the bacteria through their bite. Instead:

1



An infected flea feeds and leaves flea dirt (feces).

2



Flea dirt gets on your skin, then you scratch the bite.

3



Bacteria enter your body through tiny cuts, eyes, nose, or mouth.

SYMPTOMS CAN INCLUDE:

Fever, headache, fatigue, muscle aches, and sometimes a rash. Most people recover fully, especially when treated with antibiotics early.

📍 WHY GALVESTON AND SOUTH TEXAS?

It's not the water—it's the environment.



Warm temperatures year-round



High humidity



Abundant wildlife (rodents, opossums, raccoons, etc.)



Outdoor pets and community cats



Fleas can thrive and circulate the bacteria year-round

Similar hotspots exist in parts of Southern California, Hawaii, Arizona, and other warm regions.



SHOULD YOU BE WORRIED?



Murine typhus is still **UNCOMMON** in the U.S. Thousands are treated for Lyme disease and flu every year—murine typhus is far less common.



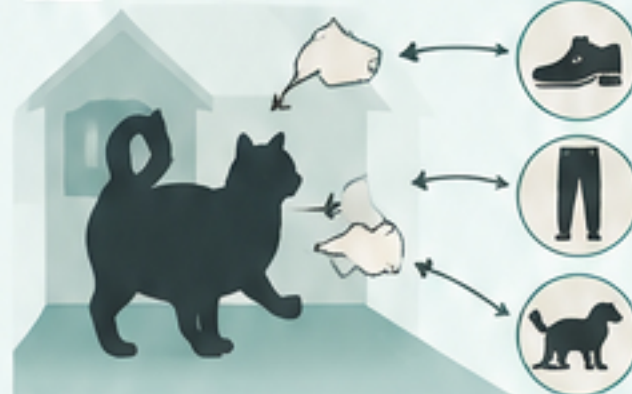
It is **TREATABLE**. Antibiotics (like doxycycline) work well, especially when started early.



AWARENESS is important. But panic is not. Focus on prevention, not fear.



CAN INDOOR CATS GET FLEAS?



Indoor cats are at lower risk—but not zero risk.

Yes. Fleas can hitchhike in on:

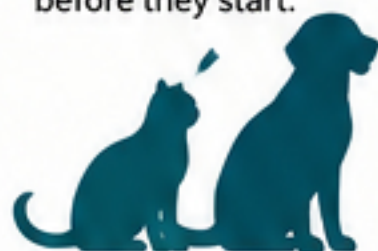
- Your shoes or clothes
- Other pets
- Visiting animals
- Wildlife or rodents around your home

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR FAMILY AND YOUR CATS



1. PROTECT YOUR PETS

Use veterinarian-recommended flea prevention year-round. It's the most effective way to stop fleas before they start.



2. TREAT THE ENVIRONMENT

Most fleas live in your home, not on your pet.

- Vacuum regularly
- Wash pet bedding
- Treat furniture, carpets, and cracks & crevices



3. REDUCE WILDLIFE ATTRACTANTS

Make your yard less inviting to rodents and wildlife.

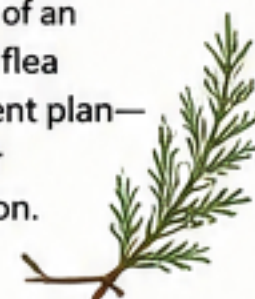
- Secure trash cans
- Remove pet food outside
- Seal openings under structures
- Keep brush and weeds trimmed



4. CONSIDER NATURAL ENVIRONMENTAL TOOLS

Products like Cedarcide (cedar oil based) may help repel or kill fleas in your home and yard.

Use as part of an integrated flea management plan—not as your only solution.



5. STAY INFORMED & WORK WITH YOUR VETERINARIAN

Your vet can help you choose the best flea prevention plan based on your location, lifestyle, and pets.



THE BOTTOM LINE

Don't fear cats—fear fleas.

Good flea control protects your pets, your family, and your community.

Knowledge. Prevention. Compassion.
That's the best protection of all.

REMEMBER

- 🐾 Fleas can carry disease, but risk is low.
- 🐾 Prevention is powerful.
- 🐾 Cats deserve love, not blame.

