

Foster – Lice

What is lice?

Lice are a parasite that can infest the fur of cats and dogs. Lice lay eggs in the fur of the animal, these eggs are called nits, and are visible white specks in their fur. The nits stick to the fur and are difficult to remove, even with brushing.

Who gets lice?

Lice are host-specific. This means that cat lice only affect cats and dog lice only affect dogs. Similar to human lice, which only affects humans. There are two different species of dog lice and one species of cat lice.

How does it spread?

Lice is transmitted by direct contact with an animal infected by the insect, or by coming into contact with contaminated objects such as bedding, clothing, grooming tools, etc.

How is it treated?

Your foster animal will have already received at least one treatment with a topical medication called Revolution, however, lice requires several treatments to eliminate the infestation, usually repeated every 1-2 weeks. Your foster animal will be sent home with any future doses required and a schedule as to when and how to treat. You may continue to see white specks on their fur, this does not mean that the treatment is not working. The white specks stuck to their fur are the nits, or lice eggs. Once all the egg casings are empty and there are no live lice identified, the treatment will be considered successful. Your foster animal will need to come back to the shelter periodically to be rechecked, a schedule will be provided to you. The recheck is a simple test using tape and a microscope to look at the nits.

What to do at home?

Lice can infect other animals of the same species in your home. If you have your own animal(s), they should be kept separate, and proper care and hygiene should be used to make sure you don't transfer the lice from the infected animal to your animal(s) in the home. This can include clothing and footwear that may become contaminated during your interactions with your foster animal. Bedding, toys, grooming tools, etc. should either be disposed of or cleaned properly before being used or shared with other animals. It would also be recommended to ensure that any personal animals in your home are current on monthly parasite preventative. General cleaning procedures are appropriate for the environment.

If your foster animal shows signs of illness, please contact HSHV's Foster Care Manager