

Angel's Haven Boarding & Rescue

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TICKS & LYME DISEASE

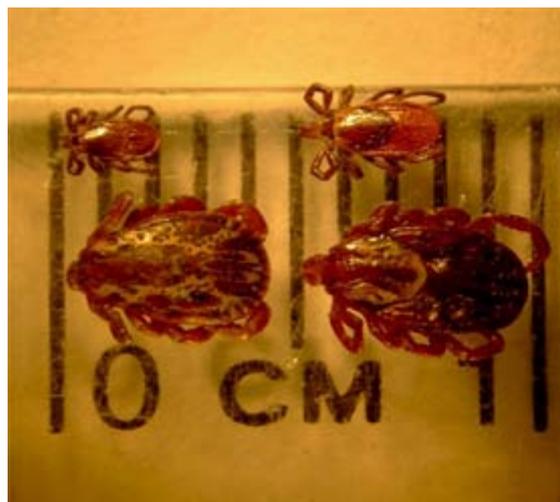
Spring is here and summer on the way! All of our friends are very excited about the warmer weather and looking forward to more outdoor time. Warm weather is lovely but with it comes our friendly little parasites that we need to protect our friends from.

Ticks are here already and everyone should be on some sort of prevention. There are two types of ticks that we see here in Manitoba. The most common is the **American dog (wood) tick** and although they can be a nuisance, they generally don't cause any harm. It is important to remove these ticks carefully and ensure the head is removed at the same time. Leaving parts of the wood tick in your pet can cause infections. This is not all that common though and the bigger problem we have here is with the **Blacklegged (deer) ticks**. These guys carry a bacterial spirochete, *Borrelia burgdorferi*. The bacteria are transmitted through ticks when feeding off of both humans and animals.

Identifying Blacklegged ticks

The Government of Manitoba has some great resources to help identify these ticks. You can visit their website for further information at:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/lyme/blacklegged.html#2>



Unfed adult blacklegged (deer) ticks, top row, and adult American dog (wood) ticks, bottom row. Note the difference in colour patterns and relative size.

Clinical signs

- The most common sign of Lyme disease in dogs is arthritis (sudden lameness, pain and swelling in joints).
- Fever
- Lack of appetite
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Excessive thirst (dehydration)
- Severe cases left untreated can cause kidney failure and death, though this is not common

Diagnosis

Diagnosis can be difficult and is generally based on signs of arthritis, response to treatments and history of being in contact with Blacklegged ticks. A blood test cannot confirm that your pet would have Lyme disease. It actually measures antibodies to bacteria but many dogs can have positive results without actually show signs of illness. The test only proves your pet was exposed to the bacteria at some point.

Treatment

General treatment for Lyme disease is simply antibiotics. The symptoms decrease with these administrations.

Prevention

- Be proactive! Check your pet regularly for ticks when returning from infested areas.
- Keep them off! Use a prevention to keep as many ticks off your pet as you can. We recommend and require all guests here be on Revolution® which helps tremendously with the ticks.
<https://www.revolution4dogs.com/default.aspx?sec=Home>
- Get your dog vaccinated. There is a vaccine available for Lyme disease.
- Speak to your veterinarian. If you have concerns about Lyme disease, or you live in an endemic area, consult with your veterinarian about the best way to protect your pet.