



# East Suburban Animal Hospital

724-325-3220

## TICKS AND TICK BORNE DISEASES

### If you are living in or visiting a tick infested area:

- Wear light-colored clothes to help in detecting ticks before they attach to the skin.
- Wear shirts with long sleeves and long pants when outdoors.
- Tuck shirts into pants and trouser legs into socks.
- Apply tick repellent (containing DEET) to skin and clothing.
- Use a combination of insecticides and repellents to help keep ticks off dogs and cats (based on veterinary direction-indiscriminate use can be harmful)
- Keep grassy areas clipped short and apply appropriate insecticides to discourage tick infestation.
- **If you find a tick on yourself, call your Doctor for advice.**

### TICK REMOVAL

- Examine yourself and your pets thoroughly for ticks at least daily
- Promptly remove any attached ticks. Disease transmission may require several hours of attachment, thus prompt removal may prevent transmission.
- Remove ticks correctly. Use a fine pair of tweezers grasping the tick as close as possible to its point of attachment (i.e. its mouth parts) and exert gentle but steady pressure. If using fingers to remove ticks, protect them with a covering such as gloves or tissue paper.
- DO NOT USE- Heat, Kerosene, or other substances
- DO NOT squeeze or crush ticks with bare fingers. Disease can be transmitted through mucosae or abraded skin.
- Wash hands and tick-bite wounds with soap and water after ticks have been removed.
- You do not need to be concerned if mouth parts remain in skin.



We are seeing an increase in both Ixodes Ticks and Lyme Disease in the last several years. We can perform a blood test that tests for both Heartworms and Tick Borne diseases. With the diagnoses of exposure to some of these diseases come a lot of good questions.

Signs of these diseases are often nonspecific and “flu-like”. They vary from very mild to extremely serious. Early diagnosis is important because treatment with antibiotics at an early stage can minimize later problems. If you suspect a problem with you or your pet, seek help immediately. Current evidence indicates that Lyme disease, RMSF, and Ehrlichiosis are not transmitted directly from pet to human beings. Any increased risk to humans is because they may be exposed to the same ticks as their pets.



Ticks transmit several dangerous diseases to people and pets. In the US, there are five tick borne diseases that affect pets and people:

- Lyme Disease
- Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever (RMSF)
- Tularemia
- Ehrlichiosis
- Babesia

We are able to test for exposure to some of these tick borne disease with the use of a simple blood test that also checks for Heartworm disease.



A tick needs to be attached for 24-48 hours before the dog is likely to be infected with Lyme Bacteria.

*We can test your dog for Lyme 6 weeks after you remove the tick.*

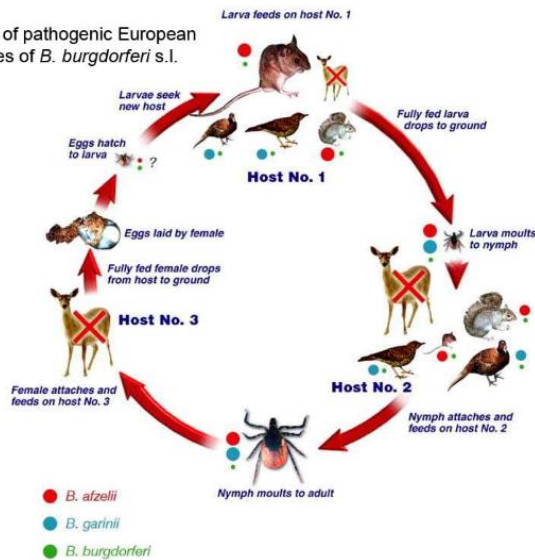


### Signs of Lyme disease in Dogs

- Transient Lameness
- Fever
- Joint Swelling or Rash
- Chronic, severe arthritis
- Rarely, of the 10% exposed, about 1% will develop Kidney Disease

Around 10% of Dogs exposed to Lyme Disease will show clinical signs

Circulation of pathogenic European genospecies of *B. burgdorferi* s.l.



Ixodes Ticks are the primary ticks responsible for transmitting Lyme Disease. Even though Ixodes ticks are often referred to as Deer Ticks because they also live on deer, white footed mice are the critical host for the Lyme Bacteria. Recent increases in the acorn crop allowed the mice and other rodents to have a population surge.

New born ticks are not infected until they feed on an infected mouse or other rodent. When the infected tick falls off, they molt and then go onto another host such as dogs, deer, or humans. The new host is infected and then may get Lyme disease.

### Prevention of Ticks and Lyme Disease

Prevention is best done by preventing exposure to ticks. If walking in the woods, keep the dog on the trail and not in high weeds and brush. Use a Flea/Tick prevention such as Nexgard (oral), Bravecto (topical or oral) or Seresto (collar) to kill ticks before they can spread the disease. In severe tick areas, Amitraz or Seresto collars or other spot on products are more effective, but some are more likely to cause side effects. **\*There are no products that are 100% effective, so daily tick checks are imperative.** Lyme Vaccinations are available, our Doctors can discuss with you if your pet should have the Lyme vaccine. Please speak to your Vet for their recommendation.

When returning from the woods, inspect your dog for ticks. They may take many hours after crawling on the dog before they attach. The ticks like to attach around the head and between the toes, but they can be anywhere. If you find one that is attached, remove it by grasping it with tweezers near the attachment and pull slowly but firmly until the tick detaches. You can also purchase a Tick Twister to make removal easier. Do **not** use matches or chemicals on the tick as they can cause damage to the dog.

### My Dog tested positive for Lyme. Now what??

If your pet tested positive for Lyme disease but is showing no signs of illness this simply means that at some point your pet was exposed to Lyme. Here are the next steps to further diagnose/treat your pet.

- A urinalysis will show us if the protein levels in your pet indicate that the exposure to Lyme have resulted in high levels of antibody-antibody complex. If the Doctor finds that your pet has higher than usual protein levels they will discuss further diagnostic or treatment options.
- If your pet's urinalysis does not have any significant findings and your pet is showing no signs of Lyme disease, we can perform further testing or you can monitor for signs.
- Some owners feel better with a treatment of antibiotics after being diagnosed. We can prescribe antibiotics, however use of antibiotics when not necessary can build resistance to those antibiotics and may make future use ineffective.
- If your pet is showing signs of Lyme disease the Doctor will prescribe a treatment of antibiotics and follow up testing.
- If you have any further questions, please call us or schedule a consultation with your Veterinarian.

*In heavy Lyme disease areas, up to 90% of dogs test positive on the blood test for Lyme Disease. Less than 10% of those have shown any signs of disease. At ESAH, 25% of dogs tested are positive. Most dogs are only transiently affected. 95% of positive dogs have no signs of illness.*