

Tick Paralysis

There are three main species of tick in our area. Only one of these (*Ixodes holocyclus* or **Paralysis Tick**) holds any major health risks for our pets, but they can be fatal so effective prevention and early intervention is vital.

How can I tell which kind of tick it is?

If you find a tick attached to the skin of your pet it is important to remove it as soon as possible. You should first kill the tick by dousing some cotton wool with Frontline, Aerogard, Rid, etc and holding the cotton wool directly on to the tick. After waiting 30 minutes, grasp the tick firmly with a pair of tweezers as close to the skin as you can. Then twist and pull.

Cattle and Bush Ticks tend to have oval-shaped bodies and their legs originate down the sides of the front half of their bodies. Paralysis Ticks, however, tend to be grey in colour, have pear-shaped bodies and their legs all originate from up near their head.

How can I tell if my pet has Tick Paralysis?

Paralysis Ticks inject a toxin while they feed that binds to the spinal cord, causing;

- Weak, wobbly, hind-end gait
- Trouble breathing or coughing
- Vomiting
- Change of voice
- Collapse and, eventually, death

If you find a tick on your pet, or they develop any of the above signs; seek immediate veterinary advice. You should also be aware that the effects of the tick's toxin can develop up to 24 hours after having already removed the offending tick

Is there an effective treatment for Tick Paralysis?

Yes, treatment for Tick Paralysis is available but prevention is better than cure. Treatment involves removing the offending tick and admitting the pet for several days for sedation, corticosteroids and Tick Anti-serum. Intensive supportive care with intra-venous fluids, antibiotics and even oxygen therapy may also be required. Unfortunately, not all patients survive Tick Paralysis, even after treatment.

Can I prevent Tick Paralysis in my pet?

Yes, you can prevent Tick Paralysis. The goal is to prevent the tick attaching in the first place but to then try and ensure they are found and removed promptly if they do get attached. We recommend;

- Daily searching; using your fingertips to examine every body surface from nose to tail tip
- Regular coat grooming and/or clipping to make searching easier
- Avoiding low-lying scrubby wet areas (where native wildlife deposit their ticks)
- The use of effective tick preventatives like Preventic Collars™, Frontline™ or Advantix™

If you have any questions about Tick Paralysis contact the clinic immediately.

“Caring for the pets of Ipswich since 1967”

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