



Animal
Medicines
Australia

Tick Awareness and Prevention

Best Practice Protective Measures for Tick Awareness

FACT SHEET





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Not Just Spring: Year-Round Risk

It's a common misconception that ticks vanish once winter arrives. A growing body of research reveals tick activity isn't confined to spring and summer - it persists through winter and even peaks during cooler months in some areas. Inland and temperate areas may see reduced tick numbers in mid-summer, but on the eastern coast, the paralysis tick heartland, cases are reported year-round. That means vigilance shouldn't be seasonal, it should be tailored to your local conditions.

Local outbreaks follow weather patterns and ecological shifts. Recent summer heat and rainfall have seen the tick population surge, particularly along the east coast. With zones previously considered low risk now seeing cases, pet owners must understand that geographic boundaries are shifting. The paralysis tick range - traditionally along high rainfall areas near the coast - continues to expand, underscoring the importance of up-to-date local advice.

The Health Threat to Pets

Tick bites aren't just irritating; they can be life threatening. Paralysis ticks inject neurotoxins that can lead to hindleg weakness, respiratory collapse, and even death - often within days. Other tick species, like brown dog ticks, carry diseases such as ehrlichiosis. Dogs with **ehrlichiosis** often get sleepy, don't want to eat and lose weight. They might have a fever, unusual bruising, or nose bleeds. Without immediate treatment such as antibiotics from your vet, dogs may die of the disease.



Ehrlichiosis was first detected in Australia in the Kimberley region in May 2020 and occurs in the northern regions of Western Australia and South Australia, all of the Northern Territory and north-western Queensland. People travelling with their dogs into areas where brown dog ticks are

present need to be aware of the disease and know how to protect their dog, as well as other communities they continue travelling to. Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities (AMRRIC) recognised the significance of ehrlichiosis for remote communities and has dedicated substantial resources to combat the disease. The animal health sector works with AMRRIC to ensure remote communities have access to effective parasite treatments, and through targeted education programs, residents are aware of these products and their benefits.

Beyond paralysis, ticks are vectors for illnesses such as spotted fever and other rickettsial diseases. The stakes are high, so early detection can be the difference between recovery and tragedy. Make it part of your routine to check your pets for ticks and talk to your local vet about the best way to keep your pets and your family safe.

A Shared Responsibility

Despite their seriousness, surveys show only half of pet owners in paralysis tick regions use any form of tick protection. For those travelling with their pets - especially into endemic areas - it's critical to think ahead: apply protection, perform daily checks, and stay alert for symptoms.

Looking Ahead

Research continues to uncover new tick activity patterns. Scientists are now mapping tick seasons beyond traditional boundaries, identifying unexpected peaks in spring and persistent activity during winter. In coming years, breakthroughs including vaccines may offer new protection options - but until then, sound husbandry, environmental control, and vigilant detection remain our most powerful defences.

Call to Action

Ticks may be small, but their impact is significant: costs of severe clinical cases can be extremely expensive, not to mention the emotional distress for families and animals involved. By partnering with veterinarians, staying alert to changing patterns, and maintaining daily routines of prevention and inspection, pet owners can drastically reduce the risk of paralysis and other tickborne illnesses.

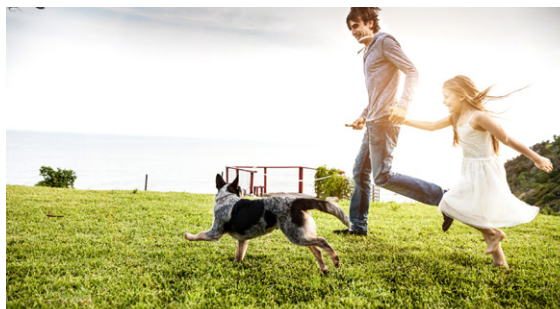
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**Daily Tick Checking**

Every evening, conduct a full-body check. Part your pet's fur with fingers and scan the head, neck, underarms, groin, paws, tail base, and ears - areas where ticks love to attack. Long-coated pets may require shaving around vulnerable areas for easier inspection.

**Safe Tick Removal**

Use fine tipped tweezers or specialist removal tools to grasp the tick close to the skin and pull upward steadily, avoiding twisting. Clean the bite site and monitor your pet over the following days. In Australia, frozen spray methods are also advised to safely detach the tick, particularly for skin allergy sufferers.

**Environmental Management**

Maintain short grass, remove leaf litter, and clear vegetation near pathways and play areas. Tick habitats aren't just in the bush - they thrive in suburban pockets too.

**Preventive Medicine Consultation**

Speak with your veterinarian about year-round tick prevention tailored to your pet's health, environment, and lifestyle. With ticks active across all seasons, prevention should not be seasonal.

**Prompt Action on Symptoms**

If your pet shows early symptoms - such as mild hindleg weakness, lethargy, changes in bark, vomiting, drooling, or breathing difficulty - don't wait. Remove any ticks and seek veterinary care immediately.



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