

## **Ticks on Dogs**

Have you ever wondered about those little pests that seem to pop up during the warmer months? Let's talk about ticks—those tiny, blood-sucking creatures that can be a real nuisance for our furry friends.

### **What Are Ticks?**

Ticks are small, egg-shaped critters that can be a greyish-brown colour, and they come in all sizes, ranging from about 1mm to 1cm. At first glance, they might not seem like much, but don't let their size fool you! When they latch onto your dog and start feasting, they can grow bigger and darker as they fill up with blood. With six legs in their early stages and eight when they're adults, these little guys can look quite spider-like, making them even creepier!



### **How to Spot a Tick on Your Dog**

After a day out walking, keep an eye out for any bumps on your dog's skin. Ticks usually prefer to attach themselves around a dog's head, neck, ears, and paws. They don't fly or jump; instead, they crawl onto your dog as they brush past, so a little inspection goes a long way! Run your hands gently over your dog's coat and feel for any unusual lumps.



## Removing a Tick

If you do find a tick, don't panic! The best way to remove it is by using a twisting motion with a tick removal tool, which you can easily find at pet shops. Here's how to do it:

1. **Get Ready:** Put on some gloves if you have them. This keeps things hygienic.
2. **Part the Fur:** Gently separate your dog's fur to get a clear view of the tick.
3. **Get the Tool:** Carefully slide the tick remover under the tick.
4. **Twist to Remove:** Once you have a firm grip, twist it in a clockwise direction a few times until it pops out. Make sure you've got the whole tick!
5. **Dispose Safely:** Place the tick in alcohol or wrap it in tissue and flush it down the toilet. Don't forget to wash your hands afterward!

**Important Note:** Never crush a tick with your fingers. These pesky pests can transmit diseases, so it's best to remove them as soon as you spot one.

## Protecting Your Dog from Ticks



Living in a tick-prone area? It's a smart idea to use a tick prevention treatment. There are spot-on treatments, collars, and tablets that can repel or kill ticks quickly. Chat

with your vet to find the best option for your dog's needs. Just a heads up—some tick treatments meant for dogs can be harmful to cats, so be cautious!

## **Why Protect Your Dog from Ticks?**

Ticks are notorious for passing along infections when they bite. They latch on, feast on blood, and then drop off when they've had their fill. Unfortunately, they can also carry microbes that cause diseases like Lyme disease and babesiosis.

## **Lyme Disease**

This serious bacterial infection can cause some concerning symptoms in dogs, especially if you take them to areas with deer or sheep. If your dog has Lyme disease, you might notice:

- Loss of appetite
- Depression or lethargy
- Fever
- Limping or swollen joints
- Swollen lymph nodes

If you spot any of these signs, it's time to reach out to your vet. They can run tests to diagnose Lyme disease and start your pup on antibiotics if needed.

## **Babesiosis**

Though it's quite rare in the UK, babesiosis is spread by a specific type of tick found primarily in southern England. Symptoms can take around two weeks to appear and may include:

- Pale gums
- Swollen abdomen
- Fever
- Loss of appetite

- Depression
- Yellowish skin

### **Tick-Borne Encephalitis**

This is a rarer disease in dogs that can also be transmitted by ticks. Symptoms include fever, loss of appetite, weakness, and even seizures. If you notice any concerning signs after walking your dog, let your vet know!

### **Where to Find Ticks**

You'll typically find ticks in wooded areas, grasslands, and even your own backyard if you live near wildlife. They're most active from spring through autumn, especially in areas with deer or sheep.

### **Ticks on Holiday**

Planning a trip abroad with your dog? Make sure to talk to your vet beforehand. Different countries may have ticks that transmit different diseases, so protecting your pup is essential.

### **Avoiding Tick Bites Yourself**

If you're hiking or exercising in areas known for ticks, here are some tips to keep you tick-free:

- Wear long sleeves and tuck your trousers into your socks.
- Check your clothes for ticks after your walk and brush them off quickly if you spot any.

- Use insect repellent on exposed skin.



### **Removing a Tick from Yourself**

If you find a tick on your body, twist it off using tweezers or a tick removal tool. Be careful not to squeeze its body, as this can increase the risk of infection. Wash the bite area thoroughly after removal.

**Important Note:** Never try to burn off a tick or cover it with lotions. This could cause the tick to release its blood back into you, heightening your risk of infection.

### **Can You Catch a Disease from a Tick?**

Yes! People can contract Lyme disease from ticks, just like dogs. If you walk in areas with deer or sheep, it's crucial to take precautions. Symptoms in humans can include:

- A circular rash
- Muscle and joint pain
- Fatigue

If left untreated, Lyme disease can lead to serious conditions like meningitis, arthritis, or nerve damage. So, if you've been bitten, tell your doctor right away.

By staying informed and taking precautions, you can help protect both you and your dog from ticks and the diseases they can carry. Happy walking!