

# TICKS

## External Parasite



At some point in their lives, many pets experience discomfort caused by external parasites such as fleas, ticks, or mites on their skin or in their ears. These parasites can be extremely irritating to pets and can cause serious skin problems or even carry disease.

### Tick Basics

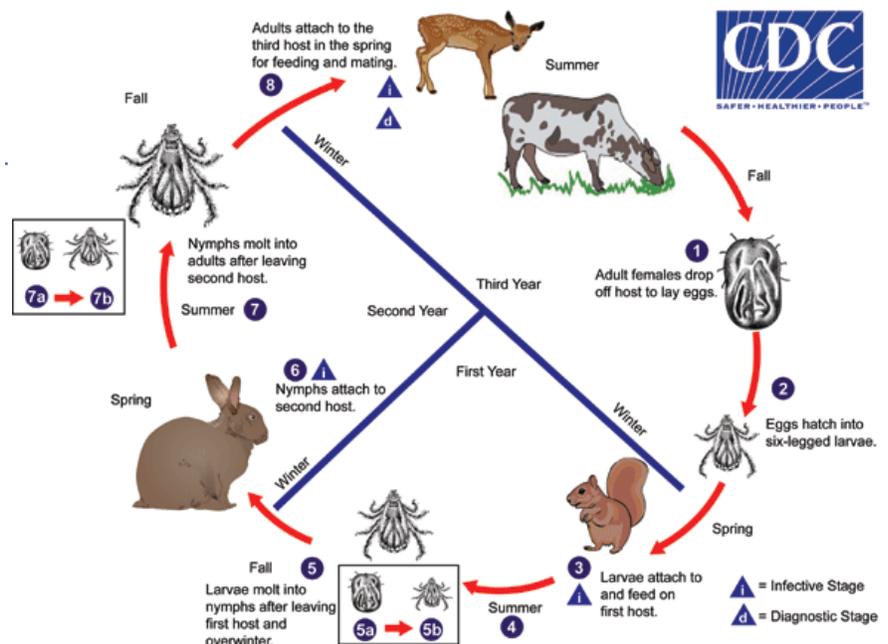
Ticks are commonly found in wooded areas, brush, shrubs and wild undergrowth. Any animal, or human for that matter, that enters these types of environments are at risk of becoming a tick's host. Small wild animals found in forests and brush are often the hosts to immature ticks. Adult ticks seek larger hosts like dogs and cats which venture into these habitats. There are many different species of ticks that can affect dogs and cats, including: the Lone star tick, the American dog tick, the Brown dog tick, and the black-legged tick.

### Diagnosis, Risks and Consequences

Ticks can be seen and felt anywhere on the body but are commonly found around a dog's neck, in the ears, in the folds between the legs and the body, and between the toes. In cats it is more common to see ticks on the neck and around the face. Tick bites can cause skin irritation. Heavy infestations can cause anemia. Ticks are also capable of spreading serious infectious diseases like Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, and others. They can also cause tick paralysis.

### Treatment and Control

Prompt removal of ticks is very important as it lessens the chance of disease transmission from the tick to your pet. To remove a tick you should carefully grip the tick, with tweezers, as close to your pet's skin as possible and gently pull the tick free. Try not to twist or crush the tick during removal as its head may become detached



and remain in the skin causing a reaction that could lead to an infection. After removing the tick, crush it while avoiding contact with the tick fluids that can carry disease. Do not attempt to smother the tick with alcohol or petroleum jelly, or apply a hot match to it, as this may cause the tick to regurgitate saliva into the wound and increase the risk of disease if the tick is infected.

Pets who are at risk should be treated with an appropriate preventative. The veterinarians at PAWS Atlanta Veterinary Clinic can help recommend a product to best suite your pet's needs. Owners who take their pets to tick-prone environments during camping, sporting, or hiking trips should examine their pets for ticks immediately upon returning home. If your pets are picking up ticks in your backyard, trimming bushes and removing brush may reduce your pet's exposure and risk of infestation.

## Did you know?

- An adult female tick can ingest up to 100 times her weight in blood.
- Tick paralysis is a form of tick toxicosis characterized by an acute, ascending, flaccid, motor paralysis. It is caused by a neurotoxin produced by females of several tick species.
- All of the ticks that infest dogs and cats also feed on people and can transmit numerous infectious diseases.
- Pets not maintained on preventative may bring ticks into the home which can then move to people and other pets.