

# TICK SEARCHING



## And Symptoms of Tick Paralysis

Paralysis ticks are potentially devastating parasites and they are an unfortunate part of life in our area. You would have heard us say time and time again that you must have tick prevention for your dog but no tick preventative is 100% effective in so even this is not enough!

You can reduce the risk of paralysis by conducting daily tick searches on your dog - naturally it makes sense to do these in the evening since they are most likely to pick them up when they are active during the day.

### TICK SEARCHING TECHNIQUE

1. **“let your fingers do the walking”**, ie search by feel, not by sight - your fingertips are very sensitive so they will feel even the smallest tick
2. be **systematic** - you need to know which parts of your dog you have and haven't searched
3. search your **dog's head, neck and shoulders first**. Most ticks will be found here. Other key areas are between the toes, in the groin and armpits and under the tail - ticks like warm, humid areas.
4. Don't forget the sneaky flap on the outside edge of your dog's ear!

### HOW TO REMOVE A TICK

Ticks cement themselves into the skin so pulling them out can be hard, and painful. Twisting the tick is the least painful way to remove them - you will need to rotate them around at least 3-4 times. You will find that you can easily grasp large ticks with your fingers but if they are small you will need tweezers or a tick hook.

Tiny nymphs (baby ticks) can be only 1mm diameter and are too small to twist so you will just have to pull these straight out.

### A FEW MYTHS TO DEBUNK

You do not need to kill the tick first - attempting to do so may harm your dog and it also means that the tick will have longer to inject toxin into them

It does not matter if you leave some of the tick in your dog. The worst that can happen is a mild infection, at least once it is dead it will not be injecting poison into your dog.

### WHAT IS A TICK CRATER

A tick crater is how we refer to the painful lump that is left after a tick drops off. It usually has a small indentation at the top where the tick head was attached. If you find a tick crater, you need to seek veterinary advice, just as you do should you find a tick.

**HELP US HELP YOU - ONCE YOU HAVE REMOVED THE TICK PUT IT IN A SEALED CONTAINER OR TAKE A PHOTO OF US SO WE CAN IDENTIFY IT!**

### **SYMPTOMS OF TICK PARALYSIS**

The tick toxin affects the muscles of the larynx, oesophagus and hind limbs first and the initial symptoms of tick paralysis reflect this.

Harsh cough/hoarse bark/lost voice

Regurgitation or vomiting

Wobbly Drunken gait (nb this can be scary so some dogs will panic while others will just lie around)

As the toxin progresses through the body your dog will

Progressively lose the ability to walk

Have more and more difficulty breathing

Eventually, if left untreated, your dog may die - this can happen for a number of reasons including exhaustion, suffocation and aspiration (breathing in) of vomitus.

### **WHEN TO SEEK HELP**

Paralysis can progress very quickly so the time to seek advice is when you first become aware that your dog has been exposed to paralysis tick poison - whether this is when you remove the tick/find a tick crater or when you notice symptoms. If you notice a problem outside of our normal opening hours please contact an emergency facility.