



Ticks

Diagnostic Plan

History
Physical examination

Therapeutic Plan

Tick removal
Insecticide baths or dips

Nutritional Plan

Nutrition based on individual patient evaluation including body condition and other organ system involvement or disease

Ticks

Your pet has ticks. Ticks are parasites that attach to the skin and suck blood. Damage from ticks includes blood loss from severe infestation and skin irritation from bites. Ticks can be removed manually or through the use of insecticides. This client education sheet will help you learn more about ticks and will review your veterinarian's instructions for your pet's care at home, as well as follow-up with the veterinary health care team.

What You Should Know About Ticks

Adult ticks lay eggs on the ground in sheltered spots such as in sheds, woodpiles, under rocks and in the crevices of walls. Immature ticks hatch from these eggs. These ticks then infest plants such as grass and shrubs as they wait for a suitable host, such as a rodent, dog or cat. After feeding on the host for up to 10 days, immature ticks fall off the animal to complete the next phase of their life cycle. Before laying eggs, most species of ticks will feed on two more host animals. A life cycle is usually completed in one year, but may take up to three years. Unfortunately, ticks can survive long periods of cold weather.

Most ticks require a moist environment for survival. But one species, the brown dog tick, can survive in areas of low moisture. This adaptation makes the brown dog tick more difficult to eliminate because it can reproduce in houses and kennels.

Ticks are indiscriminate parasites: they may feed on dogs, cats, rabbits, deer, people and other hosts.

Signs

Ticks may appear on any animal that is exposed to tick-infested vegetation. If the infestation is uncomplicated, its only sign may be ticks attached to the animal's skin. Ticks are usually found on the ears, head and neck, but may also be found on any part of the body. Ticks may be found in various stages of engorgement, so they appear from small and brown to large and whitish brown, or any size and color in between. The skin where a tick is attached may be reddened and inflamed. This finding is common when ticks attach themselves to the skin lining the ear and cause an ear inflammation.

Ticks can carry many microorganisms from one animal to another. As a result, tick infestation may be accompanied by or precede disorders such as Rocky Mountain spotted fever or Lyme disease, a disorder characterized by joint and musculoskeletal abnormalities. Though rare, ticks may cause a paralysis in dogs that responds to removal of the ticks.

Diagnosis

Finding ticks is diagnostic of the infestation.

Treatment and Home Care

A tick may be removed with forceps after the tick is soaked with alcohol. Insecticidal dips can then be applied as needed to control the infestation. In some cases, such as ear inflammations, your veterinarian may prescribe antibiotic/anti-inflammatory ointments.

Eliminating ticks from homes and kennels may require spraying the premises with an insecticide designed to kill ticks. Repeated treatments are often necessary. Spraying vegetation with insecticides and attempting to decrease the outdoor rodent population will help control ticks in the environment.

Nutritional Plan

If your pet has ticks or one of the several complications that accompany tick infestation, your veterinarian may suggest a dietary change based on your pet's age and body condition, the degree of infestation and severity of the complications and the presence or absence of disease in other organs and body systems. If your pet has complications from tick infestation such as anemia, your veterinarian may give you special feeding instructions. Anemic pets may benefit from foods with increased levels of protein and energy during the recovery process. Such foods include Hill's® Prescription Diet® i/d® Canine and i/d® Feline Gastrointestinal Health.

Transitioning Food

Unless recommended otherwise by your veterinarian, gradually introduce any new food over a seven-day period. Mix the new food with your pet's former food, gradually increasing its proportion until only the new food is fed.

If your pet is one of the few that doesn't readily accept a new food, try warming the canned food to body temperature, hand feeding for the first few days, or mixing the dry food with warm water (wait ten minutes before serving). Feed only the recommended food. Be patient but firm with your pet. This is important because the success or failure of treatment depends to a large degree on strict adherence to the new food.

Presented as an educational service by



Home Care Instructions

Client's Name: _____

Patient's Name: _____

Medication(s): _____

Nutritional Recommendation: _____

Follow-Up Appointment: _____

(Hospital Stamp Area Above)

REGULAR VISITS WILL HELP OUR VETERINARY HEALTH CARE TEAM PROVIDE FOR YOUR PET'S BEST INTEREST.