

TICKS!

The purpose of this article is to discuss the perils of the TICK. The majority of cases that I have seen have involved the attempted removal of the Tick by the dog owner. Often the tick is pulled out of the skin and the barbed mouth-part is inevitably left behind. This broken mouth-part can often cause infection, allergic reaction, and in some cases can cause a fatal reaction.

To all dog owners I would say this -***call your veterinarian first*** before attempting to remove a tick. It is better to leave it attached, than attempt to remove it on your own.

The other rising concern is the fact that some ticks carry the Lyme disease organism. Lyme disease is spread through an IXODID TICK which is native to many of the of the US states bordering Ontario, to the south. The southern states of primary concern are Connecticut and New York. Also there is an endemic area in Long Point Lake Erie.

In humans, after being bitten by a tick that has transmitted *Borrelia burgdorferi*, many will suffer a rash, flu like symptoms and joint pains. In the following weeks other symptoms could develop, which may result in long term health issues, including neurological and heart problems.

In dogs, Lyme disease may not begin to manifest for weeks to months after infection, at which point the dog may present with a fever and arthritic symptoms. The most serious long-term canine threat having been infected with Lyme disease is Glomerular disease. This is a type of kidney damage that occurs when the immune system has been over stimulated over a very long period of time, by a latent infectious organism. Thankfully, if diagnosed, canine Lyme disease responds very well to an inexpensive course of antibiotics.

If you intend visiting the areas mentioned above, you should consider having your dog vaccinated against Lyme disease. Happily, in most parts of Ontario we do not encounter this Tick so we do not need to worry, in this vicinity, at least at this point in time.

Your veterinarian can give you advice on these matters, and can recommend one of several types of Tick control products that are available for your pet.

Please call your Veterinarian if you have any questions or for further information about Lyme disease and your pet's vulnerability.