



Check your pet for ticks at home

Don't be fooled by the size of ticks – even these small bugs can cause big problems for your pet. Because ticks feed on blood, they can transmit diseases such as Lyme disease, anaplasmosis, and Rocky Mountain spotted fever. Here are a few tips to help protect your pet from these dangerous pests.

Prevention:

- Talk to your veterinarian about starting a preventive product that is effective against ticks as well as fleas. It is important to use these products year-round, as ticks are often able to survive throughout the cooler months. Although tick-borne diseases are less common in cats, it is still important to use year-round preventatives to protect them from tick bites and infestations. However, be sure to check that the product is labeled for cats, as they can have severe reactions to products intended for dogs.
- There are several canine vaccines available to help prevent Lyme disease. These vaccines should be given even if you are using a preventive product. They can also be used to help prevent new infections in dogs that have already been treated for the disease.

Manual scanning:

- Even when using a preventative product, manually checking for ticks is highly recommended. Some products are made to kill ticks, but not to repel them. This means they can hitch a ride on your pet and into your home. It is best to check for ticks daily, but it is especially important after your pet has been in a grassy or wooded area.
- The most efficient way to check for ticks is to start at one end of your pet and work your way down their body. Use your fingers to comb through their fur, paying special attention to their head as this is a favorite spot for ticks to hang out. Be sure to check their ears, between their toes and inside their limbs. Apply enough pressure to feel for any bumps or scabbed areas, especially on pets with longer fur. Remember that ticks can range in size, from a grain of sand to a large blueberry. The size can depend on their age, type, and whether or not they have had a recent blood meal.

If you find a tick, call your veterinarian for advice on tick removal.