

# TO YOUR *Pet's* Health

## AVOIDING Ticks



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I don't know about you, but I am ready for warmer weather! Unfortunately, with warmer weather comes those nasty little critters called ticks! Is there anything more disturbing than finding a tick crawling on your pet or you! Here is some information about ticks, and ideas on how to avoid them.

There are 4 main ticks in Kansas that can be found on your pets. They are the American Dog Tick, Brown Dog Tick, Deer Tick and Lone Star Tick. Check out [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) and search Tick ID for some great pictures of the different ticks. Just remember the larval and nymph stages of these ticks are so small that it is very hard to identify them with the naked eye.

Ticks prefer to hang out in wooded areas or in tall grass. They are unable to "jump" onto their host (you or your pet). So, they rely on the host to brush against the shrub, tall grass or weeds that they are hanging out on. Keeping your pet out of the woods and tall grass, keeping your lawn trimmed short, keeping your yard free of brush piles and using gravel barriers are some ways to minimize contact with ticks.

Let's face it, it is not always practical or reasonable to avoid places that ticks like to hang out. If your pet loves being outside, the best way of keeping ticks from latching on and feeding for days, is to put your dog on a Tick Preventative. There are both topical, ones that you apply to the pet's skin, or chewable ones available. Some last a month and some can last up to 12 weeks. The best place to get information on what preventatives are available and how they work is your veterinarian.

Not only are ticks just creepy, they can also carry bacteria that cause significant disease in your pet and potentially you. Some of the different diseases that can occur are Anaplasmosis, Babesiosis, Ehrlichiosis, Lyme Disease, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever and Tularemia. Not every tick carries disease, and not every type of tick can carry all these diseases. [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov), search word Tick, has some great information on these different diseases.

Keep in mind most tick prevention products are not repellents, they still require the tick to feed. Once the tick feeds, the product kills them in less than 48 hours. Why is this important? It's all about time. The key thing to remember is that the tick needs to be removed as soon as possible. The disease-causing bacteria the tick may be carrying, is more likely to be transmitted the longer the tick is attached to feed. If the preventative kills the tick in less time, then the chance of contracting the disease is minimized.

Ideally you should check your pet daily and remove any ticks you may find. However, sometimes the ticks are small enough or are hiding well enough you may not see them. While other days are so busy, that we forget to check for the ticks. That is why it is important to keep your dog on a preventative, to make sure the ticks will not survive if they are missed.

Hopefully you are as excited about the thought of spring as I am! Now, instead of dreading the ticks that come along with it, you can try to avoid and prevent them.



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