

# UK tick-borne diseases



## Introduction

Ticks can transmit various diseases to dogs.

Worryingly, over the past decade, climate change seems to have had a marked effect on the number of ticks living in the UK, and as a result the incidence of tick-borne disease in dogs is increasing.

Pet owners should therefore consider special protective measures to help guard their dogs from this threat.





## What do ticks look like?

Ticks vary in appearance but in the UK they are most often small (up to 1cm long), brown or greyish, oval or bean-shaped objects attached to the skin. A close inspection at the skin's surface will usually reveal tell-tale legs. These help you distinguish a tick from a wart.



## At what times of the year is my dog at risk?

Although ticks can be found throughout the year, they are particularly active during spring and early summer, and again from late summer into autumn.



## Where is the risk of tick infestation highest?

Ticks are most prevalent in woodland, heath and moorland, often in areas populated by deer or other livestock. British hotspots include Thetford Forest in Norfolk, the New Forest in Hampshire, the Lake District, the Yorkshire Moors, the Scottish Highlands and the uplands of Wales.

## What disease can be transmitted?

The two diseases most commonly transmitted in the UK are Lyme's disease (also called Borreliosis) and Anaplasmosis.

### Lyme's disease

Lyme's disease is caused by a bacterium called *Borrelia burgdorferi*. The disease may cause fever, lameness, arthritis, renal failure and meningitis. If your dog contracts Lyme's disease, urgent treatment with antibiotics is required.

### Anaplasmosis

Anaplasmosis is caused by a bacterium called *Anaplasma phagocytophilum*. The disease also affects cattle, sheep and horses, but in dogs, anaplasmosis leads to fever, anorexia, joint pain and swelling.

## What can I do to prevent tick-borne disease in my dog?

After taking your dog for a walk in a high risk area, inspect it carefully for ticks, and remove any that you find as soon as possible.

Correct removal of a tick requires care and dexterity, and special tick hooks or tweezers are obtainable from your veterinary surgeon. Used according to instructions, these will greatly facilitate the removal process.

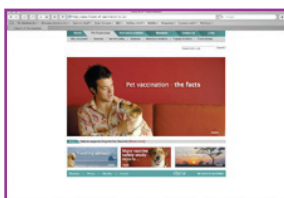
On no account should ticks simply be pulled off or burnt, as this will almost certainly result in part of the parasite being left embedded in the skin.

Although regular inspection and removal of ticks from your dog is helpful in preventing tick-borne infections, prevention is a much more reliable approach. Your veterinary surgeon will be able to supply collars that can prevent tick infestations and feeding for up to six months.



## More information

For further information about tick-borne diseases please don't hesitate to contact your veterinary surgeon or visit our website



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