

# PET TALK

Summer 2008



## IS YOUR PET AT RISK?

Tick species are found worldwide and may infest dogs and cats, especially during certain times of the year. These blood-sucking parasites are often found in tall grass, where they will attach themselves to a passing animal. Ticks require physical contact to infest your pet and their barbed mouthparts allow them to anchor firmly in place while sucking blood from their host.

Risk is increased if:

- You and your pet spend time camping, hiking, or hunting in wooded or undeveloped areas.
- Your dog is exposed to wildlife that are frequent tick hosts (deer, rodents, raccoons, etc.).
- Your yard has dense shrubs, tall grass, or leaf litter which serve as common tick habitats.
- You take your dog to wooded areas or grassy meadows.
- Your pet is not on a tick control product.

## WHAT PROBLEMS DO TICKS CAUSE?

Tick bites are uncomfortable for your pet and can cause skin irritation. They may even abscess where the tick is attached – especially if the mouthparts are left behind when the tick is removed. Ticks are also capable of spreading serious infectious diseases (such as Lyme disease) to the pets and the people on which they feed.

## CHECK FOR TICKS

It is important to check your pet regularly for ticks. Carefully check every part of your pet, particularly around the head, ears, legs, and paws. If you find a tick please bring it into us so we can have it tested for disease.

It is possible that your pet may have had a tick attached without you noticing. So watch out for any of the warning signs which could indicate a tick-borne disease. Contact one of our health care professionals if your pet shows any of these signs:

- Fever
- Depression
- Lameness
- Cough
- Loss of appetite
- Arthritis or swelling in joints

## THE LIFE CYCLE OF THE TICK

1 Adult tick bites and infects deer, dog or raccoon

6 Nymph leaves host and molts to adult tick

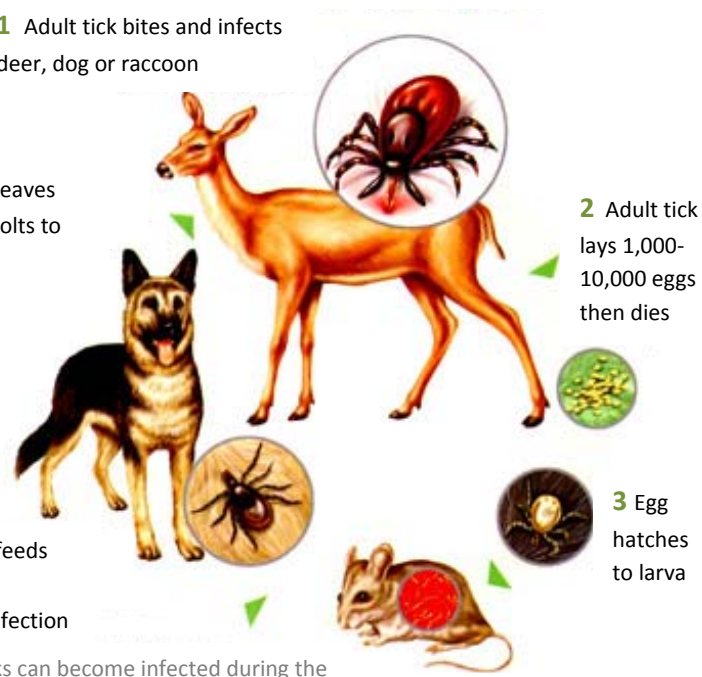
5 Nymph feeds on dog and transfers infection

Ticks can become infected during the larval and nymph phase by feeding on small mammals that harbour bacteria that cause Lyme disease

2 Adult tick lays 1,000-10,000 eggs then dies

3 Egg hatches to larva

4 Larva feeds on small mammal then leaves the host and molts to nymph



## IN THIS ISSUE

### What you should know about ticks



**Tidbit:** Ticks are not actually insects, but belong to the arachnid family

Leduc Veterinary Hospital  
 5710 47<sup>th</sup> Street  
 Leduc, Alberta  
 T9E 6Z9  
 (780) 986-3269  
[www.leducvethospital.ca](http://www.leducvethospital.ca)



Talk to one of our health care professionals. Ask us for advice on the most suitable tick control product for your pet.

