

How to help protect your pet from paralysis ticks



a) Search pets every day for ticks

The most essential part of a tick control regimen is a thorough search of your pet's skin and coat **at least once a day**, even if tick control products have been applied. This procedure gives you the best chance of finding a tick before serious tick toxicity can occur.

b) Avoid the tick habitat

During the tick season, don't take your dog walking in bush areas known to harbour ticks. Keep lawns and shrubs short and remove compost material from backyards.

Be systematic with your search

Use the fingertips to feel through the animal's coat. Ticks or tick craters can be felt as lumps on the skin surface.

- ~ Start at your pet's nose and slowly examine the face, ears, lips and eyes. **Most ticks are found forward of the front legs, especially on the face, neck and ears, however be careful of skin folds around the lips and ears.**
- ~ Search around the eyes and on top of the forehead carefully before checking the neck.
- ~ Remove collars and search through the skin folds in the neck. Continue down the shoulders to the forelegs. Remember to check between the toes and under the armpits. Examine the chest, back, belly, around the tail and anus and the back legs.

If you find a tick, remove it and don't forget to search for more. Some dogs can be infested with many ticks at one time.



c) Remove ticks

As soon as a paralysis tick is found it should be removed. Your veterinarian can show you the best method. A special hook or tweezers may be useful.

d) Preventatives for paralysis tick control

In addition to daily searching, application of products specifically intended for tick control can greatly reduce the risk of tick toxicity. Ask your veterinarian for advice.

Two products which are widely used for flea control also have good activity against ticks. These are **FRONTLINE PLUS®** and **FRONTLINE® SPRAY**.

FRONTLINE PLUS is for tick control on dogs and should be used every two weeks for paralysis ticks.

FRONTLINE SPRAY is for use on dogs or cats and should be used every three weeks for paralysis tick control. The spray should be applied over the whole body but take special care to rub some around the head, neck and legs using rubber gloves.

While **FRONTLINE** will greatly reduce the risk of tick paralysis, use of the product does not guarantee prevention of all cases of tick paralysis because ticks are not killed immediately after attachment. It is therefore **essential** that you continue to search your pet daily after **FRONTLINE** applications. If ticks are found during this search they should be removed immediately.



FRONTLINE
Recommended by Veterinarians. **Plus®**

Please talk to your veterinarian about the best ways to protect your pet from tick toxicity.

To learn more about paralysis ticks or to sign up for **FRONTLINE** treatment reminders, visit www.frontlineplus.com.au



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PARALYSIS TICKS

PREVENTION FOR YOUR PET



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INTRODUCTION

The paralysis tick (*Ixodes holocyclus*) is one of the most dangerous parasites that can affect your pet. It is estimated that many thousands of dogs and cats are paralysed in Australia each year and, unfortunately, some die. We sometimes refer to this paralysis as tick toxicity.



This leaflet is designed to help you better understand paralysis ticks and provide information on how you can help to protect your pet against them.

Where do we find paralysis ticks?

The paralysis tick is found on the eastern seaboard, from North Queensland all the way down to Victoria. In the north, paralysis ticks may be found all year round, while in the more southern areas, the season begins in spring and finishes in late autumn. They are not always restricted to the immediate coastline and can be found inland in suitable habitats.



Paralysis ticks may be found on animals that live in or near bush or scrubland. Native animals such as marsupials, birds and reptiles are the natural hosts, however ticks can also become attached to and affect dogs and cats.

Avoid scrub during tick season

How does the tick cause toxicity?

When the tick sucks blood from the host animal it secretes saliva that contains toxins that may cause toxicity in cats and dogs.

Older dogs are at slightly higher risk, but dogs of any age can be affected.

How to identify the paralysis tick



Adult tick~1-2mm long

Once on an animal, the tick attaches to become deeply and firmly embedded in the skin.

When a tick attaches to the skin, the surrounding area may become red and a raised thickening of skin or "tick crater" may appear. A crater may indicate evidence of a prior tick attachment.



Engorged adult tick >3mm long

When an adult tick feeds on blood, it dramatically increases in size.

Symptoms of tick toxicity

If your dog or cat lives in or visits a high risk area for paralysis ticks, it is important to look out for the following symptoms of toxicity:

- ~ Loss of coordination in the hind legs (wobbly or not being able to get up)
- ~ Change in voice or bark
- ~ Retching, coughing or vomiting
- ~ Loss of appetite
- ~ Progressive paralysis to include the forelegs
- ~ Laboured or rapid breathing.

Not all cases follow a simple progression and the animal can die suddenly in the very early stages of toxicity.

What to do if your pet shows symptoms of tick toxicity

1. Seek veterinary attention as soon as possible.
2. Keep your pet calm and at a comfortable temperature (not too hot or cold).
3. Search all over your pet for a tick or ticks and remove them as soon as possible.
4. Do not offer food or water, as this may lead to pneumonia and breathing difficulties if your pet can't swallow properly.

Your veterinarian may give your pet an anti-toxin to help recovery. Other specialised procedures such as sedation and treatment for respiratory complications may be required for your pet's complete recovery. Your pet may require hospitalisation for several days.

