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Is Your Pet Ticked Off?

A common parasite, especially during the summer months, is the tick. Ticks can be found in most climates. Although they are most often found in wooded, damp and grassy areas before they attach to a pet. Some tick bites are harmless, but others can cause skin damage, irritation, hypersensitivity and anemia.

The most common diseases transmitted by tick bites are Lyme disease, tick-borne fever and Rocky Mountain spotted fever. If left untreated, these diseases can cause severe health problems that can be fatal. The following are warning signs that your dog or cat may have a tick-borne disease.

Lyme disease symptoms:

- Arthritis
- Lameness
- Depression
- Loss of appetite

Tick-borne fever symptoms:

- Weakness
- Cough
- Labored breathing
- Fatigue
- Discharge from the nose or eyes

Rocky Mountain spotted fever symptoms:

(Symptoms are similar to those of tick-borne fever.)

- Loss of appetite
- Lethargy
- Depression
- Feverish
- Lameness

Contact your veterinarian immediately to schedule an examination and a blood test if you believe that your pet has been bitten and infected by a tick. If you remove any of the ticks from your pet, save them in a bottle – your veterinarian may want to examine them in order to determine what type of ticks they were. Remove ticks with tweezers or with a special “tick remover.” Never remove a tick with your hands or a match.

The proper way to remove a tick with tweezers:

Step 1 - Grip the tick as close to the head as possible

Step 2 - Gently twist and remove

This article is an excerpt from the Parasites & Their Control chapter of PSI’s Certificate Program. PSI’s Certificate Program is designed to provide the knowledge necessary for a PSI member to excel in pet care, health and nutrition, business and office procedures, and added services for pet-sitting businesses.

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