

Ticks, Ticks, Ticks, Ticks

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What Are Ticks?

Ticks are parasites that feed on animal blood. There are four distinct stages of a tick's development from eggs to larvae to nymph to adults. Between each stage ticks must have a blood meal. The whole cycle usually takes about a year from egg to adult. It is easy to confuse the different stages of a tick's development for different species of tick.

Where Are Ticks Found

There are many species of tick in Australia. The most common tick in New South Wales is the paralysis tick, which is found along the State's eastern coastal strip and inland for about 30 kilometers. As the majority of the population also lives along the coast, encounters with this tick can be frequent. Ticks, like many insects, occur in humid, moist bushy areas. Eggs are typically laid in leaf matter or mulch. Ticks are not very mobile but rely on passing animals to both feed on and transport them. Ticks may appear to drop onto clothing after brushing past bushes or trees or may fall from overhanging branches, especially around clothes lines

Ticks are found
along the
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The Different Types of Ticks

The Paralysis Tick is the single most dangerous parasite for dogs on the eastern coast of Australia. Just one tick is capable of causing paralysis and death. Dogs may become infected with ticks as they brush through long grass or scrub. The Paralysis Tick releases toxin during the feeding which causes a variety of clinical signs. These include a change in the dog's bark and wobbly hind legs which, if left untreated, often leads to fatalities.

The Brown Dog Tick is a serious pest of dogs. It is unique in that it can survive for long periods off the host. There can be massive numbers of ticks in a dog's environment, either in its kennel or even the home, acting as a reservoir for continual re-infestation of the dog if not treated. Brown Dog Ticks can cause "tick worry" with dogs licking and scratching at the attachment sites. In large numbers they can cause anemia.

The Bush Tick affects dogs from irritation of the skin to extensive blood loss in heavy infestations

Do you know the difference between ticks?

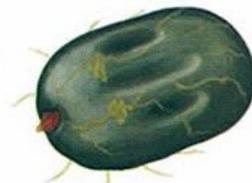


A caption is a sentence describing a picture or a graphic.

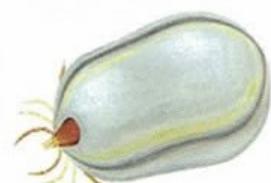
FEATURES	BUSH TICK	CATTLE TICK	PARALYSIS TICK
Legs	Dark red-brown First pair close to snout	Pale cream Wide space between first pair and snout	First and last pair brown, others pale In v-shape line from snout down sides of body
Body	Oval	Oval to Rectangle	Pear-shaped to oval
Face	Broadly oval	Oval, wider at front	Oval, wider at rear
Snout	Short, wider at face	Short, straight	Very long



Bush tick



Cattle tick



Paralysis tick

What paralysis ticks can do?

The paralysis tick injects a toxin into its host dog or cat as it feeds. Normally, cats show more resistance to this poison than dogs, but if affected the signs are similar for both. Increased body temperature due to either hot weather or exercise will exacerbate symptoms.

If left to run its course, a case of tick poisoning goes through three stages.

Early signs:

- A change in voice; the meow or bark becomes softer and/or changes pitch.
- Weakness in the back legs; walking along then sitting down suddenly is a common early sign.
- Vomiting, especially if it happens several times in a day and you see froth.

Later signs:

- Wobbliness in the back legs.
- Excessive salivation and vomiting is not uncommon.
- Panting, progressing to loud breathing, even grunting noises.
- Many dogs will exhibit a moist cough and breathing problems before other signs. (Particularly common in King Charles spaniels, schnauzers and other short-nosed dogs, this is a dangerous sign because it may lead to pneumonia.)

Worsening signs:

- As signs of poisoning progress, the animals become unable to stand.
- Breathing becomes exaggerated and difficult.
- As breathing becomes more difficult, the gums become cold and blue-tinged. Death follows quite quickly.

Products to help reduce the risk

FOR DOGS :

Advantix® Advantix will kill both fleas and ticks when applied every two weeks. As well, it may repel ticks. (Because it is water-safe, it is suitable for dogs that occasionally swim.) Advantix is toxic for cats. Please separate your dog and any cats on the day of application and, obviously, do not use on cats.

Frontline® Plus When you apply this preventative onto the skin between the shoulder blades, it spreads over the your dog's entire body, killing ticks on contact. It must be applied every two weeks, and you should not wash your dog 48 hours before or after application. Because the chemical can be diluted by daily or frequent swimming, we recommend you regularly search for ticks just in case. Frontline Plus is not an effective preventative for larval- and nymph-stage ticks.

Frontline Spray® This spray claims three-week protection from paralysis ticks. If you do use Frontline, it should be at the highest dose rate at least every *two to three* weeks, but no longer.

Tick collars. We have received mixed reports about these collars. On the plus side, they are relatively inexpensive and can work well, particularly at preventing larval and nymph tick attachment. On the negative side, they must be replaced every six to eight weeks depending on the type, they're unreliable for dogs that swim and they have a rather pungent chemical smell which puts some people off. We also don't recommend tick collars in situations where there are young children or multiple dogs who play rough.

FOR CATS:

Fido's Free-Itch Rinse Concentrate® Despite the name, we use this product at PAH as part of our protocol for all cats with ticks. It kills ticks on contact and prevents further attachment for up to three days.

Frontline Spray® This insecticide is effective for cats when sprayed every three weeks, but only if the coverage is thorough. Registered for tick prevention in cats, it is safe to use from just two days of age.

