

THE DANGERS OF THE PARALYSIS TICK

The Paralysis Tick and the Brown Dog Tick are the two most common ticks found on our domestic pets. However, it is the Paralysis Tick that is by far the most dangerous. It causes paralysis in a variety of forms but a 'typical' case starts with weakness of the hindquarters which progresses to total paralysis of all four limbs. Other typical early signs include an altered bark or meow and vomiting. When the chest muscles and muscles of the throat become affected, the dog or cat is in serious trouble. When a Paralysis Tick affects a pet, the pet can often die. Preventing tick paralysis is a much safer and cheaper alternative than treating the condition once it has occurred.

Where and when does tick paralysis occur?

The Paralysis tick is found mostly along the eastern coast of Australia, but has also been reported in Western Australia. They can also be found inland in suitable habitats. Ticks need humidity and mild weather to develop and will not survive and breed in cold climates. Paralysis ticks primary hosts include possums, birds, bandicoots, koalas and kangaroos. As adults they can survive without feeding for up to 77 days. **It is vital to protect your fur baby all year round!**



Searching your pet for tick

As we live in a tick-infected area, it is important to examine your pet for ticks on a daily basis. If you have taken your pet for a walk through the bush or have been camping with your dog, then examining them when you get back home is essential. Don't try to 'look' for ticks, try to feel for them instead. Ticks are a lot easier to find if you rub your fingertips through your pet's coat rather than if you try to visually search for them. In 70% of cases ticks are found around the head and neck region, but it is necessary to examine the entire pet (including inside the ears, around the eyes, under collars, under lips, between the toes, under the tail, chest and belly area).

The Paralysis tick is often grey in colour and all of the legs are bunched towards the front of the tick, not spread along the side of the body. There is still some debate on the best way to deal with a tick once you have located it. If there are any signs of toxicity, then your first priority is to get your pet to your veterinarian. The tick needs to be removed urgently as the residue of the tick's toxin

under the skin can continue to cause a problem. Although the tick has been killed and removed, the animal can still become paralysed from this residue of poison. The poison is slowly absorbed and may cause paralysis hours or even a day or two later.



Signs of tick paralysis

Dogs and cats can often lose the control of the throat and voice box, with regurgitation and vomiting and hind-leg weakness/paralysis are the most common. The weakness and paralysis rapidly ascends up the spine towards the head with total paralysis occurs, laboured breathing and grunting is common at this stage.

Preventing tick paralysis

The good news is tick paralysis can easily be prevented!

Manufacturers are releasing new products onto the market regularly to make the job easier and more reliable. In tick prone areas like ours, it is essential that your pet has regular and adequate tick prevention. Searching your pet's daily for ticks is also highly recommended. **Don't take chances with ticks.** They are the most deadly of parasites that can infest your pet and they can kill. Treatment for tick paralysis can be expensive and outcomes often unpredictable.

We recommend Nexgard, Nexgard Spectra or Bravecto for dogs and Bravecto Top spot for cats. These products are easy to use and are an effective means of protecting your precious fur babies!

