

Tick-Borne Diseases In Dogs

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Tick season is upon us, so it will be important to be prepared for potential diseases in your canine patients. Ideally, tick bites will be prevented rather than treated with tick prevention medications. Medications you use might include chewables, such as [Nexgard or Bravecto](#), or topical treatments, such as K9 [Advantix](#). There will likely be times, however, when you have a dog come into your office that already has a tick bite. In these scenarios, it will be necessary to have accurate information about tick diseases so you can determine the best ways to treat your patients.

[Lyme Disease](#) is one condition most veterinarian offices are familiar with. Lyme disease comes from spirochete bacteria, or borrelia. Deer Ticks usually carry this disease. This tick may also be referred to as a Black-Legged Tick. The tick must be attached to the dog for 36-48 hours for a disease to occur. It is important to note that symptoms are not instant. If a pet owner brings their dog to your office, you will need to inform them that symptoms typically appear 2-5 months after a bite. Symptoms they should watch for include lethargy, limping, fever, and enlarged lymph nodes. If it is not treated in a timely manner, kidney disease is also a possibility, so it will be critical to provide pet owners with treatments for their pets before it gets that far. Four weeks after a bite, you can conduct an [antibody test](#). Other blood tests you might conduct later include [PCR tests or a joint fluid analysis](#). If a blood test comes back positive for Lyme Disease, you have a few options as a veterinarian. Antibiotics, such as [doxycycline or amoxicillin](#), are common treatments. There are also vaccines for Lyme Disease, which is another option to investigate. The vaccine may not be appropriate for all situations.

[Canine Ehrlichiosis and Anaplasma](#) are other diseases you may encounter at your practice. There are a few different species of Anaplasma that are more common in dogs from North America. Species include Phagocytophilum and Platys, which are bacterial organisms. Platys is most common in coastal states, while Phagocytophilum appears in the Northeast and Midwest. Anaplasma can occur in canines anywhere in the world. Some symptoms look like what you might see in Lyme Disease. Other symptoms are more serious, and include low blood platelets, which can turn into bleeding disorders. Canine Ehrlichiosis is another disease that may cause low blood platelets. This is a disease that you may encounter anywhere in the world, and is carried by the Brown Dog Tick, Lone Star Tick, and American Dog Tick. It will be important for you to keep an eye on symptoms 1-3 weeks after a bite so you can quickly make decisions about treatments, which may include using the antibiotic [doxycycline](#) for 30 days. Waiting too long to provide treatment can cause more serious issues for dogs.

As a veterinary professional, it's important to have critical knowledge about possible diseases ticks might carry. This will allow you to provide appropriate treatment to your patients. Having this technical information will also help you make determinations about the best course of action for dogs that come into your practice.