

Ticks on pets

Overview

- Ticks are blood sucking parasites that attach to, and feed on pets.
- Ticks that are removed quickly and correctly, don't usually cause problems, but if their head/mouth parts are left behind after removal, infection can sometimes develop.
- Some ticks can carry (and transmit), nasty diseases such as Lyme Disease.
- Preventing ticks is easy - there are lots of products that repel and kill them.

Parasite treatment during the pandemic

If your veterinary practice isn't able to dispense your dog's usual prescription parasite treatment you could try contacting another veterinary practice. If this isn't possible, you may need to consider using a non-prescription product (from a pet shop, or online) until your vet is operating a full service again.

How do pets get ticks

Ticks are most common in long grass, woodland and moorland areas. They are also common in areas with lots of wildlife and farm animals because they



Oscar the dog picked up a tick on his head while he was walking in long grass.

can live on animals, such as sheep, foxes, hedgehogs and wild rabbits. Ticks are most common when the weather is warm (between spring and autumn).

Identifying a tick

- Ticks are small, round, often shiny and can be black, pink, purple or bluish grey.
- They have a very small head and a large body that can grow up to 1cm as they feed.
- Ticks are often mistaken for a skin tags or lumps, but if you look closely you will see their legs close to where they attach to the skin.

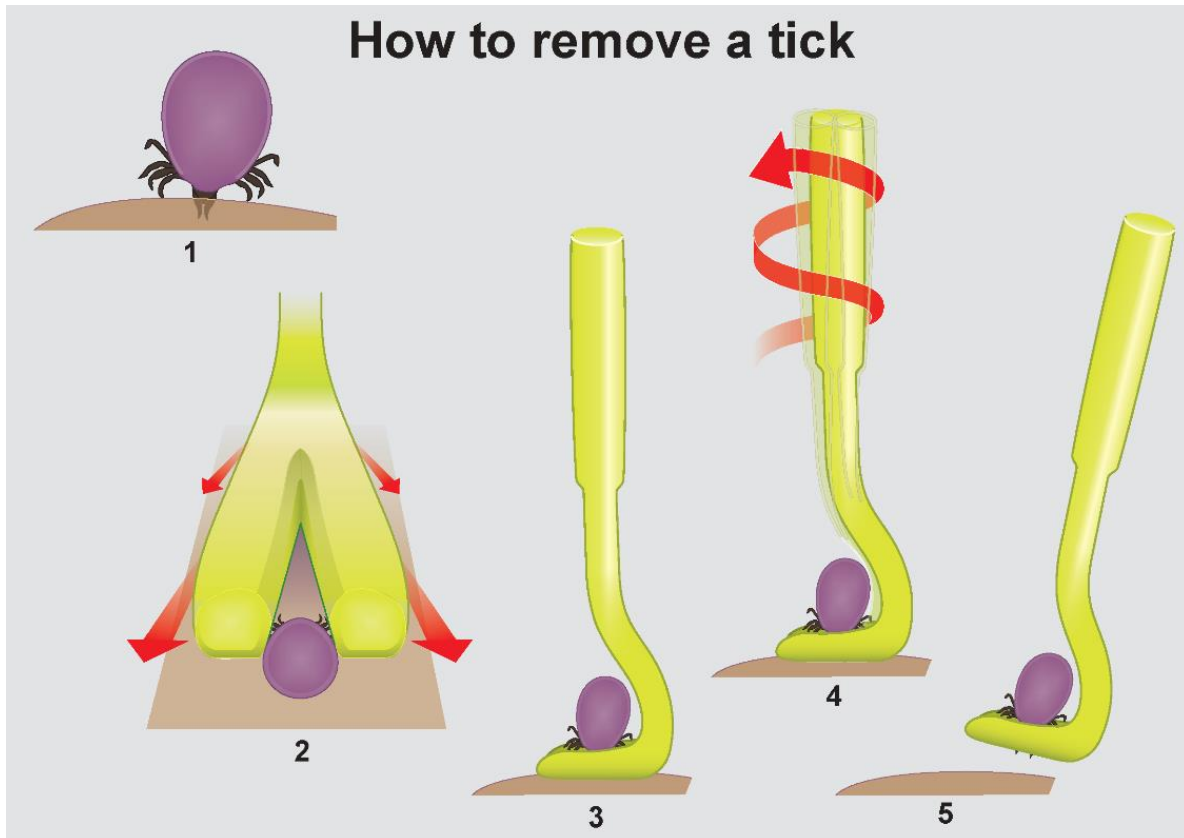


How to remove a tick

Ticks should be removed as soon as possible. **Never remove a tick by pulling, crushing or squeezing** - they have a large body and a small head which attaches to the skin, if you pull the tick you are likely to leave the head behind which can cause an infection.

- Slide a tick twisting tool under the tick, as close to the skin as possible*
- Make sure the tick is held firmly inside the hook. Use a smaller hook if it feels loose.
- Twist the tool two to three times in one direction until you feel the tick loosen from your pet. **DO NOT PULL THE TICK** - it will let go when you twist.

- Slowly lift the tool away when you feel the tick loosen, it should stay trapped in the hook.



After removing the tick, clean the area and monitor your pet for any signs of illness. If you're unsure about removing the tick yourself, contact your vet for help.

* You can use normal tweezers but be very careful to hold the tick as close to the skin as possible

When to contact your vet

Most pets don't need any treatment once a tick has been correctly removed. But if you're worried that you may have left any of it behind after removal, it's best to contact your vet for advice. You should also contact your vet if your pet's skin looks sore, infected or is very itchy.

Some ticks in the UK can also carry diseases such as Lyme disease (Borreliosis). Common signs of Lyme Disease include:

- [Limping, stiffness](#) and swollen joints that shifts between legs
- Fever (high temperature)
- [Low energy \(lethargy\)](#)
- Swollen lymph nodes (glands) around the body

If you're worried your pet may have Lyme Disease, book an appointment with your vet.

Find out whether you are eligible for free or low cost PDSA veterinary treatment by visiting www.pdsa.org.uk/eligibility

Preventing ticks

There are lots of different ways to prevent ticks such as:

- Tick collars, tablets or spot-on products.
- Some flea treatments kill and repel ticks.
- Stick to paths or open spaces - avoid long grass.
- Avoid places known for ticks (find out if [ticks are common in your area](#)).
- Regularly check your pet for ticks after walks, they are most common on the head, ears, armpits and belly.
- If you're going to a new place, or taking your pet on holiday with you, check how common ticks are in that area.

Can humans get ticks?

Yes, although ticks can't live on humans, they can still bite and feed on us, which can cause irritation, infection and disease. Ticks can also transmit diseases such as Lyme Disease (Borreliosis), although this is rare. If you find a tick on yourself or someone else and you have concerns, it is best to contact your local health care services or the NHS for advice.

Published: April 2020