

Lyme Disease

Borreliosis

Lyme Disease, caused by the spirochete *Borrelia burgdorfi*, is also known as Borreliosis. It most commonly is associated with polyarthritis in dogs, cattle, horses, and humans.

In this part of USA the disease is most commonly transmitted to dogs and man by the bite of the deer tick. Mice are the main reservoir host for the larval and nymph stages of this tick. Cats are NOT known to contract Lyme Disease, but can harbor the ticks and thus bring infected ticks into your environment.

Many dog may be exposed to the disease and never show any clinical signs.

Common signs of Lyme Disease in dog:

1. Acute and/or persistent LAMENESS of unknown origin
2. Listless; stiff
3. Poor appetite; weight loss
4. Fever, unsociable behavior

Less frequent, complicated Chronic Lyme Disease can involve: persistent severe arthritis, kidney failure, heart conditions, central nervous systems disturbances, and possibly death.

A positive blood test indicates your pet [and possibly yourself] has been in contact with ticks infected with Lyme Disease. Whether <animal> has the active disease is based on the presence of clinical signs. A Lyme test may take 1 - 2 months after a infected tick bite for the antibody level to be adequate to test positive.

Treatment with antibiotic and analgesics for 3 - 4 weeks generally is used in mild cases. The patient usually seems much better within 3-5 days. Further blood studies should be done if <animal> does not show improvement within the first week. Dogs should be monitored every 1 - 4 months for the return of clinical signs. Repeat infections are possible, so preventative measures should be employed.

Severe cases may be life threatening, and require hospitalization to start treatment. Antibiotic administration and supportive care may be required for 4 to 9 months or longer. In 2002 ,4 dogs and 2003,2 more died of complications of Lyme Disease at this veterinary hospital.

Prevention

Avoidance of tick habitat, usually high grass and woods. Adult ticks in this area are usually seen April-July. Immature ticks appear in late Fall-early winter, and again in early Spring. In years with mild winters we have seen ticks in December thru March. Therefore, you should check dog all year around for tick. They can be anywhere on the body, but often attach around the neck, ears and face. Remove ticks ASAP; apply Flea & Tick Spray on tick; wait 10-15 min; remove with pair of tweezers grasping head. If problem - call office.

For those who live in a high tick area, we recommend using a preventative for 8 to 12 months of the year [depending on the severity of the winter]. Currently EAAH recommends a once a month dab on application of Frontline or Advantix and/or the Preventic Collar which must be changed every 3 months.

All dogs in your family should be tested for Lyme Disease exposure.

We recommend young dogs, and new arrivals, living in the high risk area for contracting Lyme Disease [currently 4 miles on either side of the Conowago Creek from Mt Gretna to E-town and down Turnpike Rd to the river.] should be vaccinated for Lyme Disease, as well as using the above preventatives.