

ANAPLASMOSIS : a tick borne disease of dogs

*Anaplasma phagocytophilum* is an intracellular bacterial infection causing clinical illness primarily in dogs, humans, horses, sheep and possibly rarely in cats. It is prevalent in areas where the deer tick, *Ixodes s.* inhabit the high grass areas and woods that have a deer population. Small mice are the most common reservoir host for *Anaplasma*. The disease is transmitted during the blood meal of the tick.

The signs of clinical disease are mainly seen in the fall when the adult deer ticks are active. Fever, lethargy, and resistance to move, along with a low lymphocyte and platelet count are the most common signs in dogs. These signs are similar to some of those seen with Lyme disease. The cite test run at EAAH differentiates to which infections <animal> may have been exposed. In a large number of the confirmed exposures, a Lyme positive test also has been present.

Treatment with the antibiotic doxycycline will relieve clinical signs within a few days, but the dog MUST stay on a 3 – 4 week course of medication. Presently it is unclear whether chronic infections exist, but EAAH has had a dog which displayed a return of clinical disease within a year.

Prevention involves avoidance of woods and high grass area where deer and tick are prevalent, or using tick preventative(s) especially in the fall months. Currently we recommend Advantix® or Frontline® once every 3 – 4 weeks and / or a Preventic collar. In high tick infested areas, you may want to keep pets on year round tick prevention.