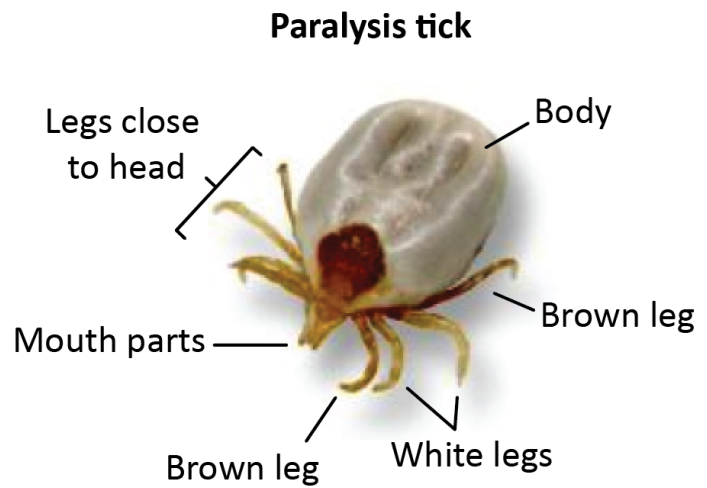


## Paralysis Ticks



Paralysis Ticks numbers have been on the rise recently. With the warm and wet weather, the more people travelling with their dogs to high risk areas we are seeing a large number of cases in the suburbs that previously had a low number of occurrences.

Paralysis Ticks do exactly as the name suggests and causing paralysis of the muscles on the dog or cat that they bite. Being bitten by a Paralysis tick can be fatal causing respiratory and cardiac arrest in severe cases. As the tick feeds, it releases a neurotoxin in their saliva. The neurotoxin travels around the body via the blood stream. The toxin is being released by the tick while they are feeding. This process can be hours to days.

It is important to note, that even if your pet has not visited anywhere that would be considered a "Paralysis Tick area" another dog may have and the tick could have fallen off and is now lurking at the dog park waiting for their next host.

Common signs of tick paralysis include

- Wobbly legs. This usually starts with the back legs, but not always
- A change in bark or meow
- Vomiting
- Coughing
- Generalised lethargy

Symptoms can start within 24-48 hours of being bitten, and can progress very quickly, so it is very important to get your pet checked over by a Vet if you find a tick, even if they are not showing symptoms.

In some cases, your pet can be exhibiting signs of tick paralysis, but the tick has already fallen off. We then look for signs that a tick has been attached. We call this a tick crater, these can be hard to locate, especially in the fluffier breeds. So any dog looking like it may have encountered a paralysis tick will need to be shaved to ensure that there are no other ticks present, and to locate any tick craters.

Animals that are being treated for tick paralysis often need to be hospitalised for several days while they recover. In severe cases involving respiratory paralysis we refer to a specialist hospital to place your pet on a ventilator until we can get the paralysis under control.

Treatment is with a tick antiserum, this antiserum stops the uptake of any further toxin from the blood to the muscles and tissues, but doesn't stop the toxin that has already been taken in by the muscles.

However, Australia's tick season has hit hard this year, and we now have a shortage of antiserum (November 2022) so prevention is even more important than ever, as you may not be able to source the lifesaving antiserum should your pet need it.

Even with prevention (which we talk about below) you should get in to the habit of daily tick searches. You should start from the nose and work towards the tail, using small finger steps to cover all areas, getting through the hair to the skin. You can also check out our social media on how to perform a tick search.

At Vets on Crown we recommend Bravecto. Bravecto is a 3monthly chew or spot on that helps prevent fleas and ticks. We use Bravecto as we find it the dogs love the taste, and the spot on is an easy application for cats.

Being administered every 3 months means it falls in with your intestinal worming, and with SMS and email reminders available to you, as well as the Bravecto App you never have to worry about forgetting to keep them safe!

Other Brands include Nexgard, Nexgard Spectra, Simparica, Frontline and Advantix, Seresto. All of which have different applications and vary in how long they provide protection for. So be sure to check the product specifications to ensure your pet is covered.