Paralysis Tick

Paralysis tick: a real threat

The paralysis tick (*Ixodes holocyclus*) produces a toxin that can cause paralysis in dogs, cats and many other species. Thousands of animals are affected by ‘tick paralysis’ each year in Australia. This tick occurs in a narrow coastal band extending from Lakes Entrance, Victoria, to the Cape York Peninsula, Queensland. Paralysis ticks may also be transported to other areas on various objects, for example within a car. Bandicoots are the main natural host for this tick, although a variety of other native and introduced animals can also act as hosts.

‘Tick paralysis’ or ‘tick poisoning’ most commonly occurs in the spring and summer months, but may occur at any time of the year. *Ixodes holocyclus* produces a neurotoxin which it secretes in its saliva. This toxin is injected into the dog or cat when the tick attaches to suck blood and feed. Some animals are more sensitive to the effects of the toxin than others. The toxin leads to the animal developing muscle paralysis and so animals may stop wagging their tail, become wobbly or unable to walk, be unable to vocalize or swallow properly, have difficulty breathing, exhibit coughing or gagging, drool, regurgitate and vomit. Eventually, animals that are affected by the paralysis tick toxin are unable to breathe and may die. There are hundreds of animal deaths each year following paralysis tick poisoning.

Seeking immediate veterinary assistance at the first discovery of a paralysis tick problem may help to save an animal’s life.

Life-cycle

Only adult female paralysis ticks attach and feed on the dog, cat or other host. Male ticks feed from the females during mating or intermittently on the host. The time till a female is fully engorged from feeding varies greatly and is primarily influenced by the environmental temperature. Once fully engorged, the female tick drops off the host and begins to lay eggs after 11-20 days. The female may lay between 2000 and 6000 eggs over the following several weeks. Once the female finishes laying eggs, she dies. The eggs continue to develop in the environment, larvae hatch after approximately 7-15 weeks and pass through various developmental stages before eventually becoming immature male or female ticks. Females typically attach to a host after 7-9 days of emerging and the cycle begins again.

The entire life-cycle may be completed in 4-5 months; however, it can take up to 14 months, depending on conditions. Temperature is an important factor in determining the rate at which ticks pass through the life-cycle, however humidity is also important. Spring and summer are usually the times when conditions are optimal for tick reproduction and survival and this is when most cases of tick poisoning and paralysis occur.

How do I protect my dog?

Prevention is always better than cure. Protect your dog with an effective paralysis tick control product.

There are a number of preventative measures available to kill ticks or prevent them from attaching
to your dog. These range from collars and tablets, to spot-on applications and washes. These products offer varying protection, your Veterinarian will help you select a product that will most suit your needs.

Whatever product you use, it is still vitally important to check your dog for ticks daily by running your finger tips throughout your dog's coat down to skin level, feeling and looking. Daily checks could save your dog's life, if the tick is found and removed before serious toxicity occurs.

Consult your Veterinarian about the best way to remove ticks, as there are many different methods and tick paralysis may still occur several days after removing the tick.

Why choose Preventic?

The Preventic® 2 month tick collar for dogs is a specialist tick control product, which kills and detaches ticks. Preventic is one of the leading brands of paralysis tick control.

- Preventic is the only collar on the market that controls deadly paralysis tick
- Longest lasting protection available
- Controls and detaches paralysis tick
- Easy to use
- One collar fits all
- Pleasant fragrance