

## Prevent disease

The best way to prevent vector-borne disease in pets is to use monthly preventative treatments. For cats, keeping them indoors limits their risk of these and other wildlife diseases.



Heartworm preventatives (anti-parasitics) are available as a pill or topical liquid. Flea and tick insecticides are available as topical spot-on treatments, impregnated collars, and more recently, in pill form. Different brands and active ingredients may be recommended depending on your pet's age, species, breed, lifestyle, and health, so be sure to consult with your veterinarian. Always read and follow label guidelines carefully. **DO NOT USE DOG PRODUCTS ON CATS OR VICE VERSA!!**

How to check your pet for ticks: Places where ticks are most likely to attach on dogs are the neck, ears, armpits, groin, and between the toes. On cats: the neck and face. Gently run your hands over your pet's body, feeling for tiny bumps. If you find a tick, remove it promptly: using a tweezers, grip close to the skin and pull upwards with a steady pressure.

## Can I get sick from my pet?

You can't get a vector-borne disease directly from your pet. But if your pet is diagnosed, it can be a sign that there are infected vectors in your backyard or places you frequent (like parks) placing you at risk. Take steps to protect yourself when going outdoors (wear repellents, perform tick checks, etc.)

Pets can also be the means by which infected ticks are brought inside your home—so using tick preventatives on your pet not only benefits them, but your whole family.

For more information visit the American Veterinary Medical Association's pages on:

Safe use of flea and tick preventatives

<https://www.avma.org/public/PetCare/Pages/Safe-use-of-flea-and-tick-preventive-products.aspx>



Diseases pets can contract outdoors  
<https://www.avma.org/public/Health/Pages/Outdoor-Enthusiasts-Precautions.aspx>

More information about Monmouth County's Tick-borne Diseases Program can be found at:

[visitmonmouth.com/mosquito](http://visitmonmouth.com/mosquito)



or contact us at  
(Tel): 732-542-3630  
[ticks@co.monmouth.nj.us](mailto:ticks@co.monmouth.nj.us)

Tick-borne Diseases Program  
Monmouth County Mosquito Control  
1901 Wayside Road, Tinton Falls NJ 07724

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## Healthy pets



Learn about tick & mosquito-borne diseases of pets

Monmouth County  
Mosquito Control Division  
Tick-borne Diseases Program



A program of the  
Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders  
Freeholder Serena DiMaso, liaison



# Tick & mosquito-borne ailments of pets

## Anaplasmosis



**Spread by:** Primarily blacklegged ticks, less commonly Brown dog ticks

**Disease agent:** Bacteria, *Anaplasma* spp.

**Who can get it:** Dogs

**Details:** Symptoms include fever, joint pain, vomiting, diarrhea, coughing or labored

breathing. Treatable with antibiotics.

## Babesiosis



**Spread by:** Brown dog ticks

**Disease agent:** Protozoan parasite, *Babesia canis* (related to malaria parasites)

**Who can get it:** Dogs

**Details:** Symptoms include fever, weakness, pale gums, swollen lymph nodes, and depression. Treated with antiprotozoal medication; dogs remain sub-clinically infected and can suffer relapse.

## Brown dog tick infestation ('kennel ticks')



**Spread by:** Close quarters with other animals

**Who can get it:** Dogs, cats

**Details:** One of the only ticks that can live indoors and infest homes. In severe cases pets may become anemic; treated by killing and removing the ticks. Chemical treatment of the home may also be required.

## Cytauxzoonosis



**Spread by:** Lone star tick

**Disease agent:** Protozoan, *Cytauxzoon felis* (related to malaria parasites and *Babesia*)

**Who can get it:** Cats

**Details:** Symptoms include fever, lethargy, loss of appetite, and depression. Can be serious and difficult to treat.

## Ehrlichiosis



**Spread by:** Lone star ticks

**Disease agent:** Bacteria, *Ehrlichia* spp.

**Who can get it:** Dogs

**Details:** Early symptoms include fever, loss of appetite, weight loss, swollen lymph nodes, and depression. If diagnosed early, treatable with antibiotics. If left untreated, chronic infection can develop and be life threatening.

## Heartworm



**Spread by:** Mosquitoes

**Disease agent:** Nematode worm, *Dirofilaria immitis*, damages the heart and lungs

**Who can get it:** Dogs, cats

**Details:** Symptoms include dry cough, difficulty breathing, lethargy, loss of appetite.

Treatment is lengthy and requires complete rest to allow the organs to recover. In cats, both diagnosis and treatment are more difficult. The prognosis is guarded and depends on disease advancement.

## Lyme disease



**Spread by:** Blacklegged ticks

**Disease agent:** Bacteria, *Borrelia burgdorferi*

**Who can get it:** Dogs

**Details:** Symptoms include fever, joint pain and swelling, loss of appetite, lethargy. Can be difficult to distinguish from Anaplasmosis. NOTE: Dogs do not get the characteristic "bull's eye" rash found in humans! Treatable with antibiotics. A vaccine is available for dogs and can aid in prevention of disease.

## Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever



**Spread by:** American dog tick

**Disease agent:** Bacteria, *Rickettsia* spp.

**Who can get it:** Dogs

**Details:** Symptoms may include fever, muscle/joint pain, loss of appetite, depression, swollen limbs, or pinpoint-sized blood spots (may look like an allergic reaction). Treatable with antibiotics.

## West Nile virus (WNV) and Eastern Equine encephalitis (EEE)



**Spread by:** Mosquitoes

**Disease agent:** Viruses

**Who can get it:** Dogs, cats

**Details:** While they can become infected, dogs and cats do not usually show signs of disease and recover quickly.

## Recognizing symptoms

It can be hard to tell if a pet is sick, since they can't tell you how they feel! Learn how to recognize common symptoms of illness in pets below.

### How to tell if your pet has a fever

Dogs and cats have slightly higher body temperatures than humans, so a human thermometer may not be accurate. Use a pet thermometer and follow instructions carefully. If your pet has a temperature of 103° F or higher seek veterinary attention.

### Check for swollen lymph nodes

Peripheral lymph nodes are located in pairs on the outside of your pet's body: under the angle of the jaw, in front of the shoulders, in the armpits behind the front legs, on the back legs behind the knees, and in the groin. Gently palpate with your fingers and feel for swelling which can indicate an infection.



### Joint and muscle pain (myalgia and arthralgia)

These are common signs of a tick-borne illness. Pets experiencing these symptoms may walk stiffly or with a limp; shift weight between their legs, as if "walking on eggshells"; and be sensitive to touch. Sometimes animals will hide their pain and instead show signs of depression (see below).

### Signs of depression in animals

Changes in your pet's behavior such as becoming more withdrawn, less willing to play and socialize, less interested in food and treats, hiding, and lack of energy can all be signs that your pet is sick.