



Turramurra Veterinary Hospital

Telephone : 02 9988 0198
Facsimile : 02 9988 0298
2 Princes Street
Turramurra NSW 2074
www.turramurravet.com.au

TICK CONTROL

What are ticks ?

Ticks are small arthropod parasites common on the Australian east coast. They are particularly common in areas of thick bush where bandicoots thrive (which are immune to their toxin).

Why do ticks attach to my pet ?

Ticks suck blood for food. 90% of ticks will attach on the head and neck, where there are large blood vessels close to the skin, but they can attach anywhere on your pet.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF TICK PARALYSIS ?

As ticks feed they inject a toxin that gradually causes paralysis. Early signs may be a **weak wobbly appearance** or a **mild cough or wheeze** as the vocal cords are affected by the toxin. Your pet may **retch or vomit** food or white froth or become **inappetant** (“go off their food”). Some pets may have a **changed bark or miaow**. As paralysis progresses the limbs are affected causing **wobbliness and collapse**, and without treatment, death from respiratory paralysis. One tick can kill a pet.

TICK PARALYSIS IS AN EMERGENCY !

Consult veterinary attention immediately if your pet shows signs of tick paralysis. Do not “wait and see how it goes”. Tick anti toxin is 90% more effective if given immediately compared to 24 hours later. Untreated tick paralysis is usually fatal. If you find a tick always check for more.

HOW CAN I PREVENT TICK PARALYSIS ?

- Pets should be **clipped short** in spring/summer to allow you to find ticks more easily.
- **All pets should be thoroughly tick searched once or twice daily** all over.
- For **CATS** preferably use **Frontline spray** every 3 weeks (or **spot on** every 2 weeks although this is less effective).

Never use Advantix on cats (Advantage is fine, for fleas only).

- For **DOGS** there are more options:
 - **Tick collars** (scalibor, preventic or kiltix)
 - **Topspots** (advantix spot on or frontline spot on every 2 weeks, or frontline spray every 3 weeks)

Winner 2009 Australian Veterinary Association Practice of Excellence in Customer Service Award
Winner 2008 North Shore Business Award – Outstanding Pet Care



Turramurra Veterinary Hospital

Telephone : 02 9988 0198

Facsimile : 02 9988 0298

2 Princes Street

Turramurra NSW 2074

www.turramurvet.com.au

- **Oral Chews**

- **Nexgard** is a new oral monthly chew for the prevention of paralysis ticks (and fleas)
- **Bravecto** is a new three-monthly oral chew for the prevention of paralysis ticks (and fleas)

- These products help reduce paralysis - none are 100% effective. Using a tick collar together with one of the other products is strongly advised. Thorough daily or preferably twice daily checks are also necessary.

What should I do if I find a tick ?

Remove the tick with Tick Twisters (available from Turramurra Vet). Ladies with long nails can pull the tick out at the base. If possible remove the entire tick but if mouth parts break off don't panic. It is not essential to remove the tick "head" and will work its own way out in time. Make a fuss of children or reward them if they find a tick. Kerosene or tea tree oil should not be used on ticks.

ALWAYS CHECK FOR MORE TICKS !

TICK PARALYSIS TREATMENT

How do our pets get paralysed by ticks ?

Ticks attach & ingest blood for food. Tick saliva contains a lethal, paralysing nerve toxin.

What are the signs of tick paralysis ?

Weakness, causing a drunken, wobbly appearance, then collapse and progressive paralysis, leading to death. Sometimes early signs may include an abnormal cough or retch, vomiting or inappetence.

What should I do in the event of tick paralysis ?

Tick paralysis is a medical emergency requiring urgent veterinary attention. Do not adopt a "wait and see" approach.

How is tick paralysis treated ?

Patients are pre-medicated with a mild sedative to reduce anxiety, then tick antitoxin is slowly injected intravenously. There is a small risk of anaphylactic (allergic) reaction to the tick anti toxin, including the possibility of death. The chance of this is minimised by giving the anti toxin slowly over 30 minutes. Patients are managed in hospital until they recover. Some patients may require intravenous fluid therapy if they are unable to eat, or oxygen therapy in a humidicrib type enclosure.

Ventilation

In severe cases, the respiratory muscles may be affected, which, if progressive, will lead to death. These severe cases may require artificial respiration at an intensive care facility.



Turramurra Veterinary Hospital

Telephone : 02 9988 0198
Facsimile : 02 9988 0298
2 Princes Street
Turramurra NSW 2074
www.turramurravet.com.au

TICK PARALYSIS AFTER CARE

When patients return home, they are weak and need **careful management for 8 weeks**. Animals are more vulnerable to ticks during this period, rapid collapse and death can occur. If paralysed again in the same summer the prognosis can be grave so keep checking for ticks daily.

Feeding

Don't feed or give your pet water until we recommend. Pneumonia can be a significant side effect of tick paralysis. When giving water initially offer 1/2 to 1 cm in the bottom of the water bowl every hour or two. Observe your pet for difficulties eating and drinking. Remove water and food if your pet is coughing or spluttering. Never force feed animals food or water. If your pet is having trouble swallowing consult us.

Exercise

It is critical not to exercise the patient during the recovery period, even if the patient appears to have fully recovered, as the heart may be affected by tick toxin. Do not try and "strengthen" the patient through exercise. This will not succeed and may endanger the patient's life. Tick paralysis is not a musculoskeletal injury in which physiotherapy assists recovery. Unexpected sudden death does occasionally occur in the recovery period due to effects on the heart. Vigorous exertional exercise such as chasing balls, frisbees, jogging or running behind a bike could cause a heart attack.

Temperature

Tick toxin affects thermoregulation (the ability of the body to control its temperature). Keep your pet from overheating or getting too cool. Keep them inside until better.

Urination

Make sure your pet can urinate – sometimes the tick toxin affects bladder control. If urination is not happening assistance may be needed.

Eyes

Check your pets "blink reflex" by touching the corner of both eyes twice daily. Paralysed eyelids may cause the eye to dry out, causing severe eye ulcers. Eye drops or ointment will be needed until the reflex returns.

CHECK TWICE DAILY FOR MORE TICKS !

Despite the most thorough searches ticks may be missed – or new ticks may attach at home. Patients are rigorously searched on multiple occasions, but it is essential to keep checking, especially if returning to high risk areas. If you find a tick always check for more.