

Published based on [What You Should Know About Dog Ticks](#)

# What You Should Know About Dog Ticks

One of the great joys of dog guardianship is spending time in the great outdoors with your best buddy. The sunshine, the fresh air, sight and sounds - what could be better.

But tread carefully, there's danger up ahead. No, I'm not talking about bears or snakes or even wolves. I'm referring to ticks!

Ticks are parasitic arachnids, related to spiders and scorpions. These parasites feed on the blood of warm-blooded creatures, and seem to have a particular fondness for dogs. If your dog spends any time outside in the summer months, it's likely he'll acquire a tick or two.

These little suckers are pretty clever too. They climb onto a long stalk of grass and wait for a likely host to come by. Then they hop on, hide themselves under the animal's fur, sink their teeth in, and start feeding.

They even inject a numbing agent into the wound, so that the dog does not detect their presence. And they are voracious feeders. A tick can suck up to 100 times its own body weight in blood. It's therefore very important to check your dog for ticks. In fact, this should be part of your grooming regime.

You'll generally be looking for two types of ticks. The hard-bodied type is normally brown in color and resembles a small round spider. The soft-bodied type is larger and grey in color. They may be flaccid, or distended, depending on how much blood they've consumed.

Ticks are a serious health threat to your dog's health and, if found, must be removed immediately. They spread some very nasty diseases like Lyme disease and are also known to attack humans. Speaking as someone who has suffered a tick bite, I can assure you it is not something you want to experience. So how do you remove these parasites? Well for starters don't follow any of the folksy remedies like burning, using petroleum jelly or alcohol. These methods don't work.

The right way to do it is with a fine-tipped pair of tweezers. Get a grip on the tick's head as close to the dog's skin as you can, then pull back gently, giving a gentle twist as you do so. Spray a hydrocortisone spray around the bite wound to take care of any irritation.

Once the tick is removed place it in a bowl with an undiluted household bleach or ammonia based cleaner. Just flushing it down to toilet won't kill it, and it may go on to infect another person or animal.

If you often walk your dog through open fields or forest, I'd recommend a monthly treatment with a preventative like Frontline. This will kill ticks already on the dog and prevent others from pilfering a free meal.

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