Dare to Prevent: Pet
Protecting Pets From Lyme & Other Diseases Ticks Carry
Pets that go outside can increase the risk of tick bites – for your pet and your family. Ticks can attach to dogs and cats and then come into your home on the animal. Ticks that are not attached can drop off and then latch onto you or another family member. Protecting your pets from tick bites is good for them and good for you! Make pet protection a priority. Use one or more of the following steps to protect everyone in your home.

**STEP 1: CONSIDER REPELLENTS & VACCINES**

- **Pesticides/medicines:** Check with your veterinarian about treating your pet with topical sprays, spot-on tick-killing pesticides or tick collars. Note: some people and animals may be sensitive to the chemicals in these products. When applied correctly and on time, these products can greatly reduce tick bites. Many products exist (i.e., Frontline®, Advantix®, NexGard™, etc.). Some newer products, like Bravecto®, last longer (12 weeks versus 4) and have higher kill rates (100% kill at 12 hours versus 48 hours). Review options with your veterinarian.

- **Insecticidal baths:** If you find several ticks on your dog, discuss an insecticidal bath with your veterinarian or groomer.

- **Vaccines:** There is a Lyme disease vaccine available for dogs. Several formulations are available. The vaccine can provide added protection and reduce the chance of your pet getting Lyme disease even if bitten by an infected tick. However, there are varying opinions on how well it works. Consult your veterinarian about the vaccine.

- **Pretreated pet bedding:** Consider permethrin pretreated pet bedding (i.e., Insect Shield®, Pet Edge*) for indoor use to kill ticks your dog may bring inside. (CAUTION: if you have cats as well, we do not encourage do-it-yourself spraying of pet bedding. Permethrin, when wet or not 100% dried, can be toxic to cats; carefully read all manufacturer directions for products you use around pets.)

**SHOULD I VACCINATE MY CAT?**

There is no scientific evidence to suggest that cats get Lyme disease. However, ticks can be carried inside by your cat and pose great risk to you and your family. Make sure you protect your cat with products that are safe for cats and kill the ticks that may come home on them.
Part of the joy of having a pet is taking them with you on outings. A few precautions will go a long way toward avoiding ticks on your walks.

- **Spray before you go.** Natural products, like cedar oil, can be used to spray your dogs before walks in the woods. Cedar works as a powerful, natural repellent against ticks. Spraying your dog before your walk helps to keep the ticks away. It also prevents ticks from attaching easily. Research any product you plan to apply on your dog or cat. Some products may be safe for dogs but harmful to cats.

- **Stay in safe zones.** Be sure to keep your pet on its leash and out of areas where ticks live:
  - **Walking zones:** Choose wide paths where pets can’t easily brush up against grassy areas at the edge of trails.
  - **Sniffing zones:** Keep pets out of areas with tall or dense grass or plants. Let them sniff short grass that is in full sun.

**STEP 2: CREATE TICK-SAFE PET ZONES IN YOUR YARD**

- **Solid fences:** Fences help keep wildlife out and your pets in. Make sure to keep the bottom of the fence clear of debris and leaves where ticks like to gather.

- **Invisible fences:** Hidden electric fences are a great way to keep your view clear and your pets in your yard. Place the fence in areas that have lower risks for ticks, like tick-safe zones (see below).

- **Wood chips:** Ticks do not like dry wood chips. Use dry wood chips as bedding in areas where your pet likes to lay down. Atlantic Yellow Cedar is best. Use wood chips to border the edge of your property, especially where grass and woods meet, to reduce the number of ticks that cross into your yard.

**TIP ON TICK-SAFE ZONES:**

Ticks do not easily survive in the sunny, middle part of your yard. They are usually found on the edges and in the woods. They move toward plants or grass or damp areas of your yard to look for a meal.

**STEP 3: TAKE TICK-SAFE WALKS**

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**STEP 4: TICK CHECKS**

- Check your pet regularly for ticks especially after every outdoor walk. Carefully comb through your pet’s hair. Check their ears, around their eyes, under their tails and even inside their mouth.
- Be alert for pet scratching or chewing on their feet or legs. Since pets have thick fur, ticks may take some time before attaching to them. If your dog or cat brings in ticks, the ticks may drop off and latch onto you or a family member inside your home.

Make protecting your pets from ticks a priority. Combine multiple steps for better protection and to keep your family safer from the diseases that ticks can carry.

To learn more about prevention measures, visit our website or social media pages.

www.palyme.org

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PA Lyme Resource Network (www.palyme.org) is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that provides awareness, education, support, advocacy and resources to navigate Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases in the state of Pennsylvania. PA Lyme was founded in 2012 by individuals with personal experience with these diseases and provides educational seminars, speakers, patient networking and research updates serving the general public, medical professionals, schools, private businesses and government entities. PA Lyme has the largest network of regionally based support groups in the state. The support groups hold local meetings and events to provide support, education and resources for their local communities.

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