

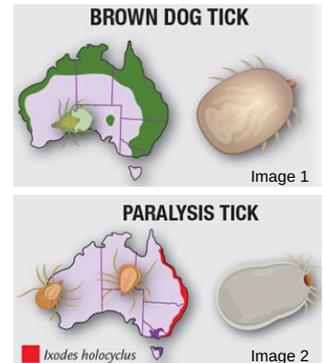
# TICKS

## ZONOOSES FACTSHEET

Diseases that spread from animals to people

### WHAT ARE THEY?

Ticks are insects that live on dogs, cats and other animals and people. There are lots of different ticks but we worry most about the **brown dog tick** and the **paralysis tick**.



The **paralysis tick** is deadly for dogs but cannot be transmitted to humans. We will still mention it here as it is so dangerous. Dogs with paralysis ticks become paralysed from the back end first, being wobbly and dropping down on their hind legs. Paralysis then moves forward along the body until the lungs are affected, the dog cannot breathe and soon dies. Paralysis ticks are only found along the east coast of Australia, but a dog may get a tick then travel away from the area before showing signs. Paralysis ticks are an emergency and an affected dog must be taken to see a vet immediately.

### HOW DO THEY SPREAD?

Ticks live in the grass and soil. They come out in warm, moist weather - during the wet season. Ticks are spread through close contact of animals, people and surfaces.

### WHAT DO THEY DO?

Ticks make animals and humans **itchy**.



**Ticks suck blood.** Animals that lose lots of blood can have *anaemia* (weak blood), making the animal weak and sleepy and can cause death.

**Ticks cause skin disease in animals.** Ticks biting the skin causes itching. Animals with many ticks can be very itchy, which can cause hair loss, skin dryness and thickening. Skin that is damaged can easily become infected.

**Ticks can cause skin diseases in humans.** Ticks can make humans itchy, causing people to scratch their skin and make sores. Sores can become infected with bacteria (such as *Streptococcus spp.*) leading to other diseases such as rheumatic heart disease and kidney disease.

**Ticks can spread other diseases to animals and humans.** Ticks can carry other germs in their blood (such as *Babesia spp.*, *Rickettsia spp.*, Q Fever) that can be passed between humans and animals when ticks suck blood.

### HOW DO YOU TREAT THEM?



**Treat the animal.** The most effective tick treatments are registered tablet/chews or spot-ons (such as Nexgard, Bravecto). These stay in the animal's blood for 1 month or longer. Other treatments, such as sprays, washes and collars, help to kill ticks but do not work as well. The vets may bring some Ivermectin sandwiches which can treat ticks. The vet may also recommend some treatments such as antibiotics or soothing creams or washes to help the skin.



**Treat the environment.** Ticks will keep coming back as long they are still around in the environment. Make sure all animals in the household are treated. Wash all bedding, toys and other materials that may be housing ticks. You can also get the outside of your house sprayed to kill ticks on the walls and ground.

**Practice good hygiene.** Wash hands often. Keep sores clean to prevent infection. Visit the health clinic to check any of your sores.



**For more information:** please contact AMRRIC on (08) 8948 1768, email us at [info@amrric.org](mailto:info@amrric.org) or visit our website: [www.amrric.org](http://www.amrric.org)

#### REFERENCES

Phelan, S., 2010, Dog Health Programs in Indigenous Communities – an Environmental Health Practitioner's Guide, AMRRIC. <https://www.amrric.org/resources/ehp-manual/>

Image 1: Brown dog tick distribution in Australia, courtesy of RSPCA QLD <https://www.rspcaqlld.org.au/blog/pet-care/what-you-need-to-know-about-ticks>; Image 2: Paralysis tick distribution in Australia, courtesy of RSPCA QLD <https://www.rspcaqlld.org.au/blog/pet-care/what-you-need-to-know-about-ticks>; Image 3: Engorged ticks on a dogs back, courtesy of AMRRIC; Image 4: Nexgard for dogs <https://nexgard.com.au/Pages/about-nexgard>; Image 5: Washed blanket drying on washing line, courtesy of AMRRIC. Other images are stock images.