



PRESS RELEASE
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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April is Prevent Lyme Disease in Dogs Month

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April is Prevent Lyme Disease in Dogs Month. Most people have heard of Lyme disease and know how prevalent it is in Vermont, but may not know much about it. Lyme disease is spread through deer tick bites and caused by a bacteria called borrelia burgdorferi. This disease can cause your dog to be lame, lethargic, and not want to eat. In more severe cases, it can lead to kidney disease and rarely death. Preventing Lyme disease through vaccines and preventatives is the best way to keep your dog healthy.

Knowing the signs of Lyme disease is crucial as immediate treatment can prevent many of the complications associated with the disease. One of the first signs seen are signs of joint pain. This includes an unusual gait, favoring one leg, difficulty walking, or walking with an arched back. Your dog may be sensitive to being petted or may cry out when jumping. Other signs include a fever, acting tired, or not wanting to eat. Some dogs develop kidney problems and will pee and drink more than normal, start vomiting, or develop acute kidney failure and stop peeing altogether.

The best way to keep your pet from getting sick is preventing Lyme disease. There are three main ways you can do this: using flea and tick prevention, getting your dog vaccinated, and checking your dog for ticks whenever she comes inside.

Inspecting your dog every day for ticks is crucial in prevention. In most cases, a tick must be attached for 36 hours to transmit the disease, so if you check every day for ticks you should be able to find any attached ones (that are large enough to be seen) and remove it. Removing a tick from a dog is best done using a tick removal device or tweezers. Grasp the body with tweezers and gently pull the tick out. You want to remove the entire tick when doing this.

Flea and tick preventatives are the best way to keep your dog from contracting Lyme. There are many different types of flea and tick prevention, including topical, oral, and spray products. Topical products are the ones you put on the back of the neck and generally last for one month at a time. Oral products are treats that you give once a month or every 3 months, depending on the brand. There are sprays available, however, these generally need to be applied every day. Sometimes it is good to use these as a supplement--if you are planning on taking your dog in a heavily wooded area, applying the spray before the hike is a great idea. However, you should still use a monthly preventative. Ask your veterinarian for recommendations for preventatives as there are many out there and some work better than others.

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Dogs can be vaccinated against Lyme disease as well. This is an annual vaccine and can help prevent your dog from getting sick. If you are interested in this vaccine talk to your veterinarian about it.

Please contact your veterinarian for advice about prevention, vaccines, and any other questions about Lyme disease and your dog's health.

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Celebrating 120 years of service in Vermont! The Vermont Veterinary Medical Association (VVMA), founded in 1898, is a professional organization of 370 veterinarians dedicated to compassionate animal care and quality medicine.