

# Lyme Disease & Pets: What Every Pet Parent Should Know?

## Tiny Tick. Big Risk.

Lyme disease is a bacterial infection spread by ticks, and it can affect dogs, cats, and people. It's much more common in dogs than cats, but tick prevention is important for every pet.

## When are ticks active?

Ticks are most active during the spring, summer, and fall, but they can be a risk year-round whenever temperatures are above 40°F. Check your pet after time in:



Tall grass



Wooded areas



Leaf litter



Brush or shrubs

## Signs to look for

Most pets exposed to Lyme disease won't become sick. If signs do appear, they may not show up until **2–5 months after a tick bite**. Watch for:

- Fever
- Limping or lameness
- Lethargy
- Decreased appetite
- Joint swelling or pain
- Swollen lymph nodes

## Help protect your pet

The best ways to help prevent Lyme disease include:

- Year-round tick control
- Routine tick checks
- Prompt tick removal
- Avoiding high-risk areas
- Asking your veterinarian whether Lyme vaccination is right for your pet



## What to do if you find a tick: Don't panic — but don't wait.

If you find a tick on your dog or cat, act quickly. Lyme disease transmission usually takes 24–48 hours after a tick attaches, so prompt removal may help reduce the risk of infection. Next steps:

1. Remove the tick carefully with tweezers or a tick removal tool.
2. Check your pet for additional ticks.
3. Monitor your pet for signs of illness.
4. Contact your veterinarian if your pet seems unwell or you're unsure what to do next.
5. Ask your veterinarian about year-round tick prevention.



## How ASPCA® Pet Health Insurance can help

Lyme disease and other unexpected illnesses can lead to unplanned veterinary costs. ASPCA® Pet Health Insurance can help reimburse eligible vet bills when your dog or cat gets sick or injured, so you can focus on your pet's care.



The ASPCA® Pet Health Insurance program with an optional preventive care plan (available for an additional fee) helps make it easier to get the care your pet needs to feel their very best.\*

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Reference: Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, Richard P. Riney Canine Health Center. "Lyme disease." Accessed April 13, 2026.