

Dogs and Lyme disease

Many dog owners are concerned about ticks and the diseases they can carry, particularly Lyme disease though there are others such as Rocky Mountain spotted fever, ehrlichiosis, and babesiosis, to name a few.

"Fifteen years ago, a lot more dogs were dying of late stage Lyme than they are today because we weren't as educated about the disease back then," explains Dr. Judy Morgan, DVM, of Clayton Veterinary Associates in Clayton, New Jersey. "These days, we don't see nearly as many fatalities as we used to because of increased education."

Dr. Morgan and other local veterinarians now know to suspect Lyme disease when a dog or puppy has flu-like symptoms such as fever, joint pain or swelling, lameness, lethargy, and loss of appetite. If a dog has a history of exposure to ticks and has these symptoms or most of them, he should be seen by his vet as soon as possible.

"95% of Lyme cases are treatable with antibiotics such as Doxycycline, especially with early diagnosis," states Dr. Morgan, "but once the disease progresses, we start seeing kidney involvement and it's much more challenging to treat."

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