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Brown Dog Tick

Control and prevention in domestic situations



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Brown Dog Tick

(*Rhipicephalus sanguineus*)

Control and prevention in domestic situations

Recently in the UK, there have been increasing reports of non-native ticks imported on dogs and the subsequent infestation of owner's houses. The tick species associated with these infestations is the brown dog tick. Unlike ticks commonly found in the UK, this species can survive indoors, which can lead to infestations if left untreated. Infestations also present a potential health risk to animals and humans, due to the ability of this tick species to transmit diseases.

Pet owners should be vigilant and inspect their animal(s) for tick activity, particularly dogs that have recently travelled abroad or been imported; areas of the animal prone to tick bites are - the ears, where the hind leg meets the body and the paws. However, a thorough check of the whole dog is required to ensure that all feeding ticks are found and removed with a tick remover tool/tweezers as soon as possible.

The host animal should be treated with an appropriate approved control product if ticks are present; pet owners should discuss treatment options with their veterinarian. The owner of the animal or a veterinary surgeon should carry out this treatment.

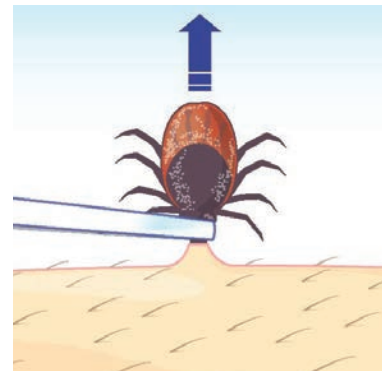
Sometimes UK tick species can be found in dog bedding. However ticks found in furniture, on curtains, or climbing walls are likely to be the non-native species and require further investigation and control. Should tick infestation in a dwelling be suspected, pet owners should seek out expert identification via Public Health England (see imported tick information via www.gov.uk/tick-recording-scheme or contact tick@phe.gov.uk), so it is clear which species of tick is being dealt with. This accurate identification is important to determine what course of action may be needed regarding control.

Control of ticks in the home should be undertaken by a professional pest control operator (PCO). Treatment by a PCO would mainly involve the application of residual insecticides (acaricides) approved for tick control both indoors and around buildings. Such products can be sprayed directly on to ticks or to surfaces. Certain desiccant powders and Ultra Low Volume (ULV) cold fog products / techniques are also approved for tick control.

PCOs are trained to use these products and they would likely treat wall-floor-junctions, cracks & crevices where ticks may be harbouring and also apply the appropriate product as a perimeter treatment around the outside of the house if justified. Furniture and soft furnishings may also need to be treated. The brown dog tick can be difficult to control when active in great numbers. The female is capable of laying up to 4,000 eggs and can survive for up to 18 months without a blood meal. Therefore, repeated treatments are recommended and often needed. This tick species may be able to live on the walls outside the affected house and also outbuildings (especially if dogs spend time in such buildings) so these areas may also require treatment.

Amateur use products from supermarkets and DIY stores etc. are unlikely to be the best route so a professional should always be consulted in cases of brown dog tick activity in domestic properties.

Pest control measures should not be applied in isolation. The dogs within the property must also be treated with appropriate tick treatments and daily tick checking/removal carried out, to ensure that fully fed females cannot lay eggs in the property and start the infestation process again. Interruption of the life cycle using this multipronged approach will give the greatest chance of success in terms of controlling brown dog ticks in dwellings.



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