

Lyme Disease: do you have your plan of attack?

You are the happy owner of a dog? Then **Lyme disease affects you** because it not only affects **dogs**, but **humans as well**.

With spring around the corner, it's time to think about your plan of attack against this disease. On the increase in Quebec, particularly in the Eastern Townships due to the significant presence of deer, this disease should be taken very seriously. It can make **your dog very sick, as well as yourself**. This infection transmitted by ticks is actually the most frequently reported in humans in Canada.

Lyme disease, what is it?

It is a disease transmitted by bites, usually painless, from black-legged ticks (deer ticks), infected with the bacteria *Borrelia burgdorferi*. It can affect dogs and humans and **cause complications if it is not detected in time**.

Symptoms of the disease in dogs

In most cases, Lyme disease is very difficult to diagnose. Several clinical signs can be confused with other diseases and can also take several months to manifest. Here are the visible symptoms most frequently observed :

- limping
- hot and swollen joints
- fatigue
- fever
- loss of appetite

Only your veterinarian can make a proper diagnosis by performing a physical examination as well as blood tests and by analyzing your pet's history.

Are you at risk?

Ticks live in the following environments :

- areas covered with grass (including lawns);
- brush;
- shrubs and woodlands (especially on the edges of trails).

To assess if you and your dog are at risk, answer the following questions:

- Does your dog have access to a park or other wooded or grassy places?
- Do you bring your dog to the cottage, camping or on hikes?
- Does your dog go with you on picnics, to the beach or for walks in the forest?
- Have you ever found a tick on your dog?

If you answered YES to any of these questions, consult your veterinarian for ways to protect your dog against Lyme disease.

To learn more about this disease in humans and ways to protect yourself, check the websites of the Canadian Foundation for the fight against Lyme Disease and Health Canada.