



Q&As with our guest experts

On March 1st, 2017, the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, in partnership with Merck Animal Health, produced a webinar on ticks and tick-borne disease prevention strategies as well as surveillance updates across Canada as part of the **2017 National Tick Awareness Month**. Below you'll find the "top 5" questions submitted as well as the answers graciously provided by our guest experts.

Robbin Lindsay, PhD

National Microbiology Laboratory Public Health Agency of Canada

Scott Stevenson, BMSc, MSc, DVM

Co-owner of Thousand Islands Veterinary Services

1. IS LYME DISEASE A CONCERN FOR PEOPLE AS MUCH AS IT IS FOR DOGS?

Dr. Lindsay: Indeed Lyme disease is not just a problem for companion animals and doctors need to be aware of the changing dynamics of risk of tick exposure. Disease in humans is much more common after exposure to the Lyme disease agent than it is in dogs so pet owners need to be aware and take the necessary steps to protect themselves from tick bites.

2. HOW DO YOU FIND OUT WHAT SURVEILLANCE FOR TICKS IS BEING DONE IN YOUR AREA AND/OR IF THEY WANT TICKS FROM DOGS?

Dr. Lindsay: The simplest approach would be to contact ticks@phac-aspc.gc.ca and they can provide a summary of which provinces are engaged in surveillance and which hosts ticks will be accepted from.

3. HOW EFFECTIVE ARE THE LYME DISEASE VACCINES? DO YOU RECOMMEND IT FOR ALL DOGS NOW?

Dr. Stevenson: We find the available Lyme vaccines to be efficacious for the entire year. We use them as part of the 3-pronged approach (tick checks, preventive, vaccine), so it is difficult to assess how much of the success is accredited to the vaccine alone, but we do know that in dogs missing the vaccine, the incidence of Lyme positivity is higher. We do recommend it for all dogs in our practice, unless there is a real reason why that dog's likelihood of exposure would be low (e.g. a Chihuahua who is only carried around in a purse, etc.). We will do an initial vaccine with a booster 3-4 weeks after the initial vaccine and then annually after that.

4. DO YOU RECOMMEND ANY PARTICULAR PREVENTATIVE FOR TICKS FOR OUTDOOR CATS OR IS THERE NOT MUCH CONCERN FOR CATS?

Dr. Stevenson: At this time, the risk of tick-borne illness in cats remains very low in Canada. However, owners are increasingly asking if there is a way to prevent ticks on their outdoor cats. As there is now a labeled flea and tick control product for cats, we will be able to give a recommendation which will put our clients at ease (preventing ticks) while also preventing fleas, which are much more likely to actually cause clinical illness in their cat!

5. IF A DOG TESTS POSITIVE FOR LYME DISEASE AND IS TREATED WITH DOXYCYCLINE, IS IT 100% EFFECTIVE?

Dr. Stevenson: In some dogs treated with antibiotics *Borrelia burgdorferi* can still be found (in smaller numbers) along tendon sheaths, etc., meaning that even with antibiotic treatment we cannot guarantee complete clearance of the bacteria. This is why we put so much emphasis on preventing the exposure in the first place.

The veterinary community is in a unique position to take a leadership role in the fight against ticks.

We invite you and your veterinary team to watch the **National Tick Awareness Month** webinar that is available for online streaming on demand.

To view the presentation recording, please go to www.canadianveterinarians.net
(www.canadianveterinarians.net/practice-economics/practice-tools-national-tick-awareness-month)



NATIONAL TICK AWARENESS MONTH is an initiative of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, in partnership with Merck Animal Health.