

It's Vampire Season! By Linda Knilans

Okay so I have been watching way too many old horror flicks. But in Colorado we have our own miniature vampires that prey on any warm blooded creature, dogs and humans alike.

The creature I am referring to is the tick. These little blood thirsty arachnids, usually are found in grasses and hitch a ride on any creature that passes by. Once on board they crawl through fur, hair or under clothing and attach themselves to skin and start to feed. They will more than triple their size as they gorge themselves on blood. If that wasn't gross enough, they carry diseases that they can infect their host with.

According to the article "Colorado Ticks and Tick-Borne Diseases" by W.S. Cranshaw and F.B. Peairs on the Colorado State University website; *Colorado tick fever is by far the most common tick-transmitted disease of the region. Another tick borne disease, despite its name, Rocky Mountain spotted fever is quite rare here. Lyme disease is an important tick-borne disease in much of the eastern United States. Fortunately, ticks known to transmit it are not known to occur in Colorado, and no confirmed cases have originated in the state.*



The most common ticks in Colorado are the reddish colored Rocky Mountain wood tick, the American Dog tick and the deer tick or winter tick.

How can you prevent getting them? Try to avoid weedy or grassy areas where wildlife may have passed. Small rodents, raccoons, foxes, coyotes deer and elk are often their transportation vehicles. If you walk or hike with your dog do a tick check to remove any of these parasites before they get a chance to bite.

Another form of prevention is to prevent them from biting by giving your dog Vectra 3d during spring and summer or year round if your dog hikes with you. Talk to your vet about what she recommends.

How do you remove them if you find one on you or your dog?

The old wife's tale of using a match or petroleum jelly doesn't work. The best way is to carefully take a tweezers as close to the skin as possible and gently but steadily pull on the creature until it releases. It is best to wear latex gloves to protect your self from any bacteria. Put the tick in a jar and pour alcohol over it to kill it. Treat the bite area with a disinfectant and wash your hands. It will probably leave a red swollen spot for a day or so. If it persists visit your vet.



What are the symptoms of a tic disease? According to article no. 5.593, on the Colorado University Extension website, they are pretty much the same in both dogs and humans, lethargy, high fever, flu like symptoms, swelling/pain of the lymph nodes, lose of appetite, and in some rare cases a limp or appearance of pain in a limb or joint.