

Fact Sheet on Tick Fever

Tick fever or canine ehrlichiosis...

- ...is spread by the bite of the brown dog tick.
- ...does not necessarily show clinical signs.
- ...can be treated with certain antibiotics.
- ...can also infect humans when they're bitten by the brown dog tick.



Ehrlichiosis occurs in three stages: **Acute, sub-clinical and chronic.**

- Dogs in the **acute phase** of the disease can show weight loss, fever, loss of appetite, swollen lymph nodes, respiratory distress, neurological and bleeding disorders, but most of the time, it goes by unrecognised.
- During the **sub-clinical phase**, the dog shows no symptoms. If the dog has a strong immune system, his body may overcome ehrlichiosis during the sub-clinical phase. If the immune system fails to overcome the disease, he'll progress to the third stage of the disease, the chronic infection.
- In the **Chronic phase** dogs are at risk for serious complications, including uncontrolled bleeding and anemia, swollen lymph nodes, swelling of the limbs, lameness, neurological disorders (for example seizures) and/or vision problems. This phase can be deadly, if left untreated.

Treatment:

- Most dogs will need treatment for 3-4 weeks

Prognosis

- In the acute phase the prognosis is excellent with appropriate therapy.
- In the chronic phase, response may take up longer.
- Progression from acute to chronic can be easily prevented by early and effective treatment, but many dogs may relapse (even years later)
- German Shepherds and Doberman can get a more severe form of the disease

Prevention is key!

- Canine tick fever is best prevented!
- If you find large, engorged ticks on your dog, he's at risk for contracting ehrlichiosis. The longer a tick feeds from your dog, the more likely he could have contracted the disease. Have your dog tested for ehrlichiosis within eight weeks if you find an engorged tick on your dog. If your dog exhibits symptoms of ehrlichiosis, make sure you tell your vet about finding any engorged ticks.
- Keep any ticks out of your environment and away from your dog.
- Remove any ticks immediately and watch your dog carefully for symptoms.
- Use a monthly product that repels ticks like Frontline or Advantage or regular spray.

See your veterinarian for more information or if you suspect that your dog might have tick fever