



Ticks, Ticks & More Ticks: Setting Proper Expectations

By: Gary Levine

With the harsh winter weather still here, it's easy to let our guard down when fighting ecto-parasites. Deer ticks only need 40 degrees °F to start seeking hosts, meaning if you're discovering ticks both in your shelter environment and on your pets, the life cycle has already begun.

At this time you may be asking yourself, "*Who's the enemy and what should I do?*" Let's take a look at who we're doing battle with:

1) Brown Dog Tick – *Rhipicephalus sanguineus*. Loves the indoors and can complete its entire life cycle in a home or shelter with the only host being our pets. Each female tick can lay 8,000 eggs in one clutch and can easily multiply to over a million ticks in your shelter in no time. If you are already experiencing the different stages: *larvae*, *nymph* and *adult*, this means there could potentially be thousands of ticks in your shelter and on your pets. Be warned, brown dog ticks are in EVERY state and can transmit ehrlichiosis and babesiosis.

2) Deer Tick – *Ixodes scapularis*. Found anywhere that there are deer; the larvae and nymph stages are very small and very hard to find on many pets. The deer tick transmits Lyme disease, anaplasmosis, and babesiosis.

3) American Dog Tick – *Dermacentor variabilis*. Found east of the Rocky Mountains and in California, this tick transmits Rocky Mountain spotted fever and tularemia and prefers grassy fields and trails. It is an interesting name for where it is found. The tick is rather large and the engorged female is easy to spot.

4) Lone Star Tick – *Amblyomma americanum*. The female tick is best known by the white star on its back (scutum). Found in Texas, to the East Coast and moving north towards the Upper Midwest and New England. Long barbed "mouth parts" make this tick difficult to remove once attached and are known to transmit ehrlichiosis and babesiosis.

Since all of these ticks are capable of spreading one or more serious tick transmittable diseases, which can affect not only adoptive pets but their owners as well, we need to be vigilant year round, each and every month (including the winter season) to prevent infestation. It is dangerous to put staff, adoptive pets and pet owners at risk. If you recognize all of the tick life stages in your shelter, then the problem is worse than you think and you need to take immediate action.

What can you do? You have an obligation to your staff, adoptive pets and pet owners to do all that you can to prevent tick infestations. Of course, it's much easier to prevent than to try and control since a tick infestation on the premises will take months to get under control.

So how do we prevent? The use of a tick and flea product every month, even in winter, is an excellent place to start. Note that you cannot just use a flea-only product, this will not work to get rid of ticks. The difference in price is minimal but the risk is high by not using a combination flea and tick product. The diseases transmitted are serious and sometimes difficult to recognize, and treatment does not always resolve the problem. Monthly prevention is key before tens of thousands of eggs are found in your shelter. Fipronil based products are excellent to use and are safe for dogs, cats, puppies and kittens. Other products that are Permethrin based are for dogs only so I urge you to please read and follow the label carefully.

What are realistic expectations? Let's start with prevention. Monthly application to all pets is critical as your pets will pick up ticks from time to time and some will attach. It takes most products 24-48 hours to kill a

tick. There are a few exceptions to this but what consumers fail to realize is that instant results are not common or realistic.

Now what about a situation where all tick life stages are being seen? This is an infestation and there will easily be tens of thousands of eggs, larvae, nymph and adults ticks, especially if the brown dog tick is in the mix – they absolutely love to be indoors. In this type of situation you must act fast. You can treat each of the pets but you must bring in a knowledgeable pest control expert to spray the entire kennel area. Be prepared to have to move the animals around when spraying the kennel, it's important that all areas are reached. Realistically it will take 5-6 months to eradicate the infestations and get back to a "zero tick" state. After learning that, you might agree that it's a whole lot easier to practice prevention by using quality flea and tick combination products year round instead of waiting until it's too late. The pest control applicator must recognize that it's a tick problem and use the appropriate acaricide (tick killer) as opposed to a product normally used for fleas. Ticks will be in the ceiling, cracks, cervices, behind dropped ceilings – all places ticks like to hide – so it's important that all of these hiding places are treated. The product also must be safe once dry for pets to return to their kennels and runs. A professional can help with all of this, allowing you to gain better control of the situation.

With this discussion you can see why new adoptive pet parents should also be educated on proper tick and flea prevention and the use of safe monthly products to use whether or not ticks are seen. Practicing safe prevention while taking advantage of PetPoint Pharmaceutical and their cost effective flea and tick combination products conveniently available year round, is a recipe for success. The experts are calling for another heavy tick season this coming spring and fall, so now's the time to start treating your animals and stop the ticks dead in their tracks.

PetPoint Pharmaceutical currently offers 4 different products to treat fleas and ticks:

PetArmor® – Contains Fipronil, the same active adulticide as the leading brand. This product kills ticks and fleas and can be used on dogs, cats, puppies and kittens. Works for 30 days and won't wash off.

Fiproguard® Plus – Break the flea life cycle with Fiproguard Plus. Contains fipronil for fleas and ticks and an IGR to break the flea life cycle by killing eggs and larvae.

Fiproguard® Max – Kills fleas and ticks; greater than 90% in 1 hour. Two adulticides, Fipronil and Cyphenothrin for rapid kill of ecto-parasites.

Fiproguard® Flea & Tick Spray – Contains Fipronil in a quiet aerosol can, no pumping needed. Treats ten small dogs and 15 cats with a single can. For animals covered with fleas and ticks, quickly spray pet all over, even in hard-to-reach tick hiding places like between the toes. Works fast, no waiting for translocation to occur.

Here at PetPoint Pharmaceutical, we pledge to make available affordable tick and flea protection for all shelters. Right now we are running a *Spring Blowout* promotion where if you buy 5 cases of PetArmor®, you get 1 case for free. You pay as little as \$4.96 per dose! Call 1-866-630-7387 x4711 today to speak with one of our sales representatives and receive a free customized quote. [Click here](#) to learn more about the *Spring Blowout* promotion and start saving today on all your flea and tick preventatives!

Sincerely,

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