



Park Veterinary Centre

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TRAVELLING TO EUROPE WITH YOUR DOG

Diseases carried by ticks:

Borreliosis (Lyme disease)

Though this disease is present in some areas of the UK such as the West Country, it is rare in Great Britain. However, the risk is still high for our dogs travelling abroad.

The signs include fever, shifting lameness, lack of appetite and enlarged lymph nodes.

Anaplasmosis

The signs are very similar to those of Lyme disease and the two diseases can often be present at the same time.

Babesiosis

The parasite causing this disease invades the red blood cells causing them to be destroyed resulting in severe anaemia.

Signs can be very sudden such as collapse with very pale gums, fast and weak pulse, depression and an abnormally low temperature (peracute presentation). Unfortunately dogs with this form of the disease usually die.

In the acute form, the dog has a fever, is weak and quiet, not interested in food or exercise and may vomit. Usually these dogs survive with prompt attention but will be carriers of the disease.

Ehrlichiosis

Signs include intermittent fever, enlarged lymph nodes, bleeding, weight loss and eye problems. If the disease becomes chronic there can be destruction of the bone marrow, which is irreversible, resulting in anaemia and low numbers of white blood cells.

All these diseases can be very difficult to treat so prevention is essential. Ticks are very resilient and can be very difficult to control effectively. You should check your dog after every walk and remove any tick very carefully, ensuring that the whole tick is removed. A tick hook is an essential tool in your first aid kit for your dog. Do not use anything else on a tick to kill it first as it tends to cause the tick to regurgitate before coming off the dog, this increases the chances of transmission of parasites. Ticks are attracted to the front end of the dog by the carbon dioxide in their breath. Use tick control medication such as frontline spray on the head/neck and front legs every 2 weeks. PLEASE NOTE THAT FRONTLINE SPRAY IS ONLY LICENSED MONTHLY TO PROTECT AGAINST TICKS. However, when used at this interval it is often not effective, especially if your dog swims. Do not let your dog swim for 48h after applying Frontline. More frequent use should not cause any problems. You need to weigh the risk of the dog reacting to the more frequent use against the risks of contracting one of these diseases.

Diseases carried by sandflies:

These insects are the most active from dusk till dawn between May and September so best to keep your dog indoors at these times. Sandflies are not associated with sand, but can be found around gardens, houses in the countryside, parklands and woodland. Protect your dog by using Advantix or a Scalibor collar. Advantix repels sandflies, Scalibor collars will kill feeding sandflies and also has a strong anti-feeding effect on the flies.

Leishmaniasis

This disease can be incubated for months to years and the signs can vary greatly. Skin signs can vary from subtle to very severe, with hair loss, scurf and ulceration. Other signs include weight loss, poor appetite, enlarged lymphnodes, eye problems, bleeding from the nose, limping, diarrhoea, anaemia and kidney problems.

This disease is very difficult to treat and is also a zoonosis (transmittable to humans). Dog to human transmission has never been reported.

Diseases carried by mosquitoes:

Dirofilariasis (heart worm)

This disease is common in Europe, especially in Southern Europe.

Signs normally develop very slowly over months to years. The dog tires more easily on exercise, loses weight and coughs. Occasionally there can be sudden death as the worms accumulate in the pulmonary artery and right side of the heart, causing heart failure.

For protection you can use products such as Advocate or Stronghold Spot On or Milbemax tablets monthly and make sure you start treating your dog a month before travel and for an extra month after the last exposure to mosquitoes.

IN SUMMARY, MAKE SURE YOU KNOW WHICH DISEASES ARE PRESENT IN THE AREA YOU ARE VISITING BY CHECKING WITH A LOCAL VET BEFORE YOU DEPART AND PROTECT YOUR DOG BEFORE YOU GO.