



**BE TICK AWARE**

The very word “tick” makes most people feel a bit squeamish and itchy; they can be an unpleasant feature of countryside walks for many pets (and even people!) These creepy crawlies are blue-grey or brown in colour and vary from the size of a pin-head to the size of a drawing pin. Whilst many people mistake them for a lump or cyst, ticks can be identified by their 3 or 4 pairs of tiny legs. You’re most likely to see them between late spring through to late autumn but we see them in winter too, if the weather is mild.

Ticks crawl up onto a warm animal and attach themselves to the skin with their special sharp mouth parts and then feed on blood. It’s important to be on the lookout for them because not only can they be irritating to our pets but they may be carrying diseases too. If you find a tick on your pet you can remove it gently with a special “tick hook” or a pair of tweezers by grasping it close to the skin and using a twist and pull motion. You must make sure you remove the whole tick including the mouth parts.

**NEVER** – pull the tick straight out – it will probably leave its mouth part behind and this can cause inflammation or a little infection in the skin.

**NEVER** – put alcohol or Vaseline on the tick – this can make it release any infection it may be carrying.

Prevention is a good idea. Some of the spot-on treatments that we use for fleas will kill or repel ticks – check with your vet, or on the packet. If you are travelling to Europe with your dog then using a good method of control is even more important since ticks on the continent can carry parasites which damage a dog’s red blood cells and can make them very sick.

