

## May 2010 Newsletter – Tick-borne Disease

There is a good reason to be grossed-out by ticks on our pets (or ourselves). Tick bites can make our pets sick. When a tick bite, its saliva reduces clotting of the host's (e.g. dog) blood and reduces the sensation of being bitten. The saliva also may contain one or more disease-causing organisms such as Anaplasma, Babesia, Borellia, Ehrlichia species, Rickettsia species or Tularemia.

Symptoms of these varying diseases may surface acutely (within a few days to weeks) or may cause more chronic problems (months, years). Prevention of tick infestation is the best way to avoid these diseases. At Intermountain we currently recommend Frontline Plus (topical Fipronil) as monthly prevention during tick season (typically April-July).

What to watch for with tick-borne illnesses:

### **Anaplasma** (Anaplasmosis):

Common Symptoms: Lethargy, decreased appetite, fever, pain/soreness/lameness

Diagnosis: Blood work to confirm

Treatment: Medication and supportive care

### **Babesia** (Babesiosis):

Common Symptoms: Fever, weakness, decreased appetite, jaundice (yellow skin), discolored urine (orange/red)

Diagnosis: Blood work to confirm

Treatment: Medication and supportive care

### **Borellia** (Lyme's Disease):

Common Symptoms: Lameness (often chronic), drinking and urinating more

Diagnosis: Blood work to confirm – can be difficult to confirm, elusive bacteria

Treatment: Medication and supportive care

### **Ehrlichia** (Ehrlichiosis):

Common Symptoms: Fever, lethargy, weakness, pale color, bleeding from body cavities

Diagnosis: Blood work to confirm

Treatment: Medication and supportive care

### **Rickettsia** (Rocky Mtn. Spotted Fever):

Common Symptoms: Fever, decreased appetite, lethargy, vomiting and diarrhea, cough, hemorrhages (easiest to see in the mouth and eyes)

Diagnosis: Blood work to confirm

Treatment: Medication and supportive care

### **Tularemia** (Q Fever):

Common Symptoms: Fever, lethargy, enlarged lymph nodes

Diagnosis: Lymph node testing to confirm

Treatment: Medication and supportive care

Tick-borne illnesses are not as prevalent in Idaho as in some states. But, should your pet exhibit any of these symptoms, they should be examined; especially if they been in tick-infested areas within the previous six months.