



**Pittwater Animal Hospital**

We are your pet's other best friend.

## FACT SHEET

### What Happens When Your Pet Has Tick Paralysis

The following treatment is based on protocols established by the National Tick Forum and our own extensive experience at Pittwater Animal Hospital.

- When you bring your pet to PAH with tick paralysis, we will conduct an examination, assess the stage/degree of paralysis and search for other ticks.
- We give all dogs a pre-treatment injection for sedation and pain relief to help prevent stress during treatment.
- We insert an intravenous catheter in one of the forelegs.
- After pre-treatment, we administer tick serum. This is the antidote to the tick toxin and is made from the serum of immune dogs. (It does not give your pet ongoing immunity to ticks.)
- Once they've received tick serum, most animals stabilise over 24 hours, then start to improve. The condition of older animals or those with advanced signs may continue to worsen due to a combination of heart and lung complications caused by the poison.
- All animals are treated with a tick rinse to kill any small ticks that may have gone undetected. Where an animal's coat is very thick, we may recommend a full clip.
- In addition, we will give animals a high dose of Proban® to kill any missed ticks.
- Nearly all pets showing signs of tick poisoning need treatment in hospital. Wherever possible, we will give you an indication of the likely time your pet will stay in hospital and an approximate cost based on its age and the stage of paralysis.
- Animals stay in hospital until they can walk properly, swallow well and urinate. Tick poison affects all muscles in the body, including the heart muscle.
- Twice daily (or more often when necessary), we'll assess the animal for the stage of paralysis, hydration status, cardiorespiratory signs and bladder function. If they're worsening, more intensive treatment may be needed.

- The best time to ring Pittwater Animal Hospital for a progress report on your pet is between 10am and 12pm or 6pm and 7pm, Monday to Saturday. On Sundays, please call between 11am and 12 pm or 5pm and 6pm. We'll give you an update on your animal's condition, an estimate of time in hospital and a running total on costs. If you have any specific concerns the nurse cannot answer, just ask to speak to the vet on duty.
- Treatments that may increase costs include intensive care hospitalisation (for very sick animals), full-body clip, intranasal oxygen, emergency service monitoring, intravenous fluids and additional tick serum.
- Tick paralysis is a complicated disease. Older animals or those with advanced signs do not always respond as quickly as we would like. Further, more intensive treatment may be needed in our attempt to save these animals' lives. We try to keep you informed as to the possible costs and probable success of treatment. However, at some stage it may be necessary for us to ask you how far you're prepared to go with what could be a rather costly treatment.
- **Tick paralysis is an unpredictable poisoning. We cannot always know how long these treatments will be necessary nor how successful they will turn out to be. However, we are prepared to offer an informed prognosis of the likely chances of success as well as provide an approximate cost of treatment beforehand.**
- One final cautionary note. On return from hospital it is most important that your pet is kept quiet with no exercise for at least two weeks to prevent heart failure or a relapse of poison signs. There will still be some tick toxin circulating in your pet's body for at least a fortnight after treatment.

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