

When tick removal goes wrong

Written by By Sam Mazzota King Syndicate
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DEAR PAW'S CORNER: After taking my Terrier "Hank" for a walk around my subdivision yesterday, I noticed when taking off his leash that a tick had attached itself to the back of his neck! I don't even know where it came from; we stayed on the sidewalk.

I quickly tried to remove it with tweezers, but Hank is kind of a wiggly guy, and just as I tugged on the tick, he moved and the body of the tick broke off! It looks like the tick's head is still embedded in his skin. What can I do? Will this hurt Hank? — Joe K. in Sarasota Springs, New York

DEAR JOE: Since the tick's body was removed, and you noticed it pretty quickly, Hank's risk of contracting a tick-borne illness is low. However, an infection might develop where the tick's head is still embedded.

Treat the bite spot with an over-the counter antibiotic ointment. Monitor the spot for a few days. There may be a little redness around the bite area as the skin reacts to the foreign object, and with luck, the head may be pushed out enough for you to grab it with the tweezers and remove.

When should you contact Hank's veterinarian? If you aren't able to remove the tick head after a few days, it's time to make an appointment with the vet. Or, if the redness spreads or if Hank seems distressed, lethargic or otherwise out of sorts, get him to the vet right away.

Removing a tick as soon as it's found is important, because even though dogs can be vaccinated against Lyme Disease, other tick-borne diseases can be transmitted to your pet. Ticks are becoming active earlier in the year, so consider starting flea and tick prevention earlier, too.

Send your tips, comments or questions to ask@pawscorner.com.

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