

Northwoods Humane Society - Deanna Persson, President

My friend's dog was recently tested for blastomycosis. The test will take a week for the results to be known. She noticed that her dog was favoring one leg and then that went away, he wasn't as full of energy but then seemed to be his own self again. On Wednesday, the dog was showing signs of discomfort in all four legs and was acting lethargic. Her vet began treatment for anaplasmosis and sent in the blastomycosis test just to be sure. Anaplasmosis is a bacterial disease transmitted by deer ticks.

I spoke to my friend this morning and she said that the dog has really responded well to the antibiotics given to treat anaplasmosis. He has no fever and is full of energy. Their fingers are crossed – hoping for no positive on the blastomycosis test.

The following information about anaplasmosis was shared by [www.petmd.com](http://www.petmd.com). Anaplasmosis disease is a challenge for both human and beast in the north woods.

Anaplasmosis is a bacterial disease that, in a dog, comes in two forms:

- *Anaplasma phagocytophilum* infects white blood cells (this is the form that is also found in people).
- *Anaplasma platys* infects a dog's platelets, which are involved in blood clotting.

Symptoms usually begin within one to two weeks of the initial tick bite and transmission.

*Phagocytophilum* is the more common form of anaplasmosis. Symptoms for dogs may include lameness, joint pain, lethargy, loss of appetite, fever and less commonly coughing, seizures, vomiting and diarrhea.

An examination of the blood is the first step to evaluate the blood cells and platelets. While the organism may occasionally be identifiable under the microscope, more accurate tests are performed in the laboratory

Anaplasmosis can be treated with the antibiotic doxycycline. The earlier in the course of disease the treatment begins, the better the outcome. Most dogs are treated for 14-30 days, though improvement is often seen within the first few days of treatment.

Even if your dog has improved clinically, it is essential to finish the entire course of antibiotics. The long-term prognosis for dogs who have undergone a full course of treatment is excellent. The best prevention includes stringent tick prevention. "Natural" tick prevention treatments are usually poorly effective, especially in highly endemic areas. A wide variety of effective spot-on treatments, oral medications and tick collars are available to best fit your dog's needs; consult your veterinarian for the choice that is best for you.

Check your dog for ticks every day, being sure to check in between the toes, under the collar, behind the ears, and in the armpits. Use your fingers to run through your dog's fur, feeling for bumps. Ticks vary from the size of a pinhead to the size of a grape; while usually dark brown or black, they turn grey after they have been attached and feeding for a period of time. Grasp the tick close to the skin using tweezers or a device specifically designed for tick removal. Dispose of the tick by placing it in alcohol or flushing down the toilet.

Prophylactic treatment with doxycycline after a tick bite is not common practice in veterinary medicine. Antibiotic treatment is reserved for clinically ill dogs that have tested positive for the anaplasma bacterium. However, many laboratories test ticks for the presence of diseases like anaplasma and Lyme. Therefore, after the tick is removed, you may submit the tick to these labs to know if it carries harmful diseases.

While anaplasmosis doesn't get the same attention as other tick-borne diseases such as Lyme and ehrlichiosis, it remains a significant disease of dogs and is being diagnosed with increased frequency across the United States