

Has your pet dog or cat lost its appetite, is losing weight, appears dull and depressed? Although these are very vague signs that something is not right with your beloved companion, it could mean your pet has Anaplasmosis – especially if ticks are around. Other clinical signs your pet may exhibit include bleeding from the nose, fever and joint pain just to name a few.



Anaplasmosis is one of the diseases loosely called “tick fever”, others being Ehrlichiosis and Babesiosis . It caused by the bacteria *Anaplasma platys* or *Anaplasma phagocytophilum* which are transmitted to susceptible hosts by a family of ticks commonly known as “hard ticks”. If you don’t already know - ticks are very efficient at transmitting disease across a variety of species, including humans! All it takes is one bite from an infected tick and these bacteria multiply in the host’s cells which may lead to acute or chronic infections.

Your veterinarian is your first line of defense against Anaplasmosis. If you suspect your pet is ill, don’t hesitate to contact him or her. Based on the initial presentation your veterinarian may decide to perform a simple blood test and within a matter of minutes it can be determined whether or not your pet has been exposed to these bacteria and may be infected. The vet can perform further laboratory testing and if the clinical signs and laboratory findings – low red blood cell and platelet counts - support a diagnosis of Anaplasmosis then antibiotic treatment with doxycycline can be initiated. It should be noted that some animals can carry the infection without showing any outward signs of illness.



Anaplasmosis is a zoonotic disease – this means humans can also be affected if bitten by infected ticks. Typically symptoms in humans include fever, headaches, chills and muscle aches manifesting within 1 – 2 weeks of a tick bite. Based on these symptoms and tick bite history, your doctor can make an initial diagnosis of Anaplasmosis, however more specific tests will need to be performed to definitively diagnose this disease. Laboratory findings are similar to those in dogs as is the drug of choice for treatment.

In controlling tick-borne diseases, veterinarians can help with information and strategies for the elimination of ticks from your pet and premises and thus prevent the potential exposure of you or your loved ones.