

## Dog Owners Understand Lyme, Not Prevention

**Survey suggests owners are aware of the disease, but unsure about ways to prevent.**

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While most dog owners appear to have a general awareness of the prevalence of canine Lyme disease, many don't understand preventive measures, such as vaccination, according to a new survey launched by Merial of Duluth, Ga., in recognition of April's Prevent Lyme in Dogs Month.

For example, 95 percent of dog owners are aware certain tick species carry and transmit Lyme disease, yet only 45 percent of owners have their dogs vaccinated against the disease.

Furthermore, 55 percent of dog owners don't or are unsure if they vaccinate their dogs against the disease, while 34 percent believe there is no effective vaccine for the disease, according to the study.

Although 92 percent agree traveling dogs may help spread the disease by transporting infected ticks, more than 25 percent of the responding dog owners believe Lyme disease is a problem in the Northeast but not much of a concern in other parts of the United States.

"Lyme-positive dogs continue to be reported across the country," said Andrew Eschner, DVM, senior technical services veterinarian for Merial. "Between traveling pets and migratory birds and animals, Lyme-positive dogs have been reported in all 50 states, making continued education and communication about this potentially debilitating disease incredibly important."

Clinical signs of canine Lyme disease include limping, lymph node swelling, fever, loss of appetite, painful joints, and general lethargy. Treatment with antibiotics usually clears up signs in dogs that have become ill, but veterinarians believe the infection remains for life, according to Merial.

The online survey of 1,005 pet owners was conducted by WMS Marketing Services between Jan. 5 and 9.