Did you know that a female tick can deposit 3,000 to 6,000 eggs on the ground? Hello, it’s Shelby with Antrim Veterinary Hospital. Ticks are not fun bugs but do you know just how dangerous these tiny creatures can be? There are at least 15 species of ticks in North America. They crawl to the tips of grasses and shrubs and as our pets brush past they hitch a ride. They cannot fly or jump; they are true opportunists.

Ticks are active outside year round except when there is snow cover. So even if the weather is cooling down we cannot let our guard down when it comes to ticks. Not only are ticks gross but they can transmit many diseases to our furry friends including Anaplasmosis, Ehrlichiosis, and most commonly in this area, Lyme disease.

So what do you do when you find a tick on your pet? First, wear gloves prior to touching the tick. If you find a tick moving on your pet then the tick has not fed yet. It is important to remove it quickly as if it has not fed then any disease has not been transmitted to your pet. Remove it quickly and place it in rubbing alcohol or crush it between two solid surfaces.

If the tick is attached you may use blunt tweezers to handle the tick. Again, wear gloves. It is best not to use your fingers as you are more likely to squeeze the tick’s abdomen while trying to remove it. This may cause the tick to empty it’s stomach contents into your pet’s skin before it is removed. Want to guess where Lyme, Ehrlichia, and Anaplasma organisms live in the tick? Yep- if the tick hasn’t been on the dog long enough to transmit those organisms you just did it for him. Grasp the tick as close to the skin surface as you can. Pull the tick straight out with steady, even pressure. Do not twist or jerk as this may cause the tick to break and leave remains in the pet’s skin increasing the risk of infection. If the tick does not release immediately continue to apply constant slow pulling for a minute or two. After the tick is removed thoroughly clean the bite area and wash your hands. Do not use petroleum jelly, grease, or a hot match to remove the tick! These home remedies may make the tick vomit which will increase the chance of getting a disease.

Here at Antrim we have a tool called “Ticked Off” which makes removing ticks very easy. You may stop in at any time to purchase one or if you are not comfortable removing a tick yourself you may bring your pet in for us to remove the tick. If you need any additional information you may visit dogsandticks.com. The best chance at beating fleas and ticks is to use a monthly tick prevention.

In my next article I’ll discuss the 3 most common diseases caused by ticks. Meanwhile remember the best prevention against ticks… a monthly tick prevention product such as Frontline Gold or Nexgard.