

Ticks

Check for ticks regularly when out in tall vegetation between May and October.

Ticks require living conditions of high humidity such as in the moist, coarse, permanent vegetation characteristic of forest, woodland, moorland and heath. Their feeding phase is late March to June and August to October.

Remove ticks as soon as possible

In the unlikely event that a tick is infected and can transmit Lyme disease the chances of contracting it are much reduced if the tick is removed within a few hours.

If a child has been bitten it is better to take them to a medical practitioner to have the tick removed to ensure all the head parts are taken out cleanly.

Do not use Vaseline, nail varnish, cigarette lighters or any of the other 'top tips' for the removing or otherwise killing the tick – they are liable to leave bits behind for infection.

If feeling able, do take a firm grip with tweezers (or a specialist tick removal tool) as close to the skin as possible and gently pull upwards with out squeezing the tick until it lets go. Take time, there is no rush or panic.

Once the tick has been removed, clean the bite area with antiseptic wipes as soon as possible.

Lyme Disease

Caused by bacteria can be transmitted from other animals to man by the adult female sheep tick. No preventative vaccine available, best precaution is to prevent tick bites.

Symptoms of Lyme disease is a skin rash at the site of the tick bite. The rash may begin between 3 and 21 days after the bite, appearing as a small red area. This will gradually enlarge and become paler in the centre; it usually disappears between 3 weeks and 3 months later. It is often accompanied by flu-like symptoms such as fever, fatigue, headache, aching muscles or joints or swollen glands.

To reduce the risk:

- Cover the skin, especially the legs with a fine, close-woven material.
- Tuck shirts into trousers and trouser bottoms into socks.
- Inspect clothing after work and before returning home.
- Examine the skin for ticks as if they are not attached already they can be picked off (they can be smaller than a pin head)
- If the tick is attached, then using a sharp pointed pair of tweezers, grasp the tick as close to your skin as possible and twist it anti-

clockwise a few turns without pulling or jerking. Cleaning the area with an antiseptic wipe.

- If tweezers are not available then apply a drop of alcohol, methylated spirits or antiseptic to make the tick release its grip. Clean with an antiseptic.
- If the mouthparts break off under the skin, consult your doctor as soon as possible.
- Wear light coloured clothing so that ticks can be easily seen.
- Applying insect repellent to skin and clothing may help.
- After a trip outdoors, always check clothing carefully, shaking or brushing woollen jumpers and socks.
- If dogs are with you, brush with a fine comb.
- When you undress, carefully inspect your skin for ticks, remembering that ticks may reach parts of the body not easily seen.

Weil's Disease

Working outside can increase the risk of exposure to some diseases, although these diseases are quite rare. This sheet has been given to you to provide you with some information about Weils disease and to make you aware of the possible symptoms associated with it.

Leptospirosis Diseases are rare but very unpleasant diseases. The leptospirosis organism is a parasite of animals particularly rats and cattle. The host animal carries leptospirosis in its kidneys and excretes them in urine, contaminating the environment.

Human infection results from exposure to infected urine. The leptospire enter the body through cuts and abrasions in the skin or via the mucous membrane of the nose, mouth and eyes.

It is common in rivers, ditches and watercourses, and on farms, particularly in haystacks and animal food stores.

Symptoms include a flu-like illness, severe headaches and meningitis and in the case of Weils disease (or leptospiral jaundice), jaundice, meningitis, conjunctivitis and kidney failure. In severe cases it can lead to death.

Precautions are relatively simple:

- Take care when pond dipping and avoid cow pats and wet muddy farmyards
- Cover all skin abrasions
- Be obsessive about hand washing with soap and water
- Avoid touching mouth, eyes or nose with wet hands

If you develop flu like symptoms 3-19 days after contact with contaminated water then you should contact a doctor, explain the circumstances and ask for the Elisa blood test