

Lyme and Leptospirosis Information

As with all potential diseases, sensible precautions will ensure that any risk is severely reduced – long trousers, washing of hands and above all awareness, will help to make sure that everyone can enjoy the countryside without cause for concern.

Ticks and Lyme Disease

It is caused by a bacterium carried by ticks. People who walk in the countryside, especially those walking through grass, rough vegetation or wild areas, such as heathland, are most at risk. Can be year round but mostly April to October.

Prevention is by wearing long trousers, tucked into socks and long sleeved shirts, with insect repellent on collars and cuffs (also on dog collars) Inspect clothing and body for ticks every few hours and at the end of your day's outdoor activity, undress completely and check for ticks (especially the warm, moist areas). They will crawl around for a few hours before biting and it can be up to 24 hours before any potential disease is spread.

If bitten, remove the tick as soon as possible by grasping it close to the skin with tweezers and twisting anti-clockwise (the head may detach but it is the engorged body that transfers the disease). Save the tick in a sealed container in case symptoms develop later.

Symptoms are flu-like to begin with, often with a red rash around the bite developing 3-30 days later. Headaches, swollen glands and aching muscles can also be symptomatic. Seek medical advice if symptoms develop and inform the doctor that you have been bitten by a tick.

Weil's Disease or Leptospirosis

An infection that comes from rats and urine, often associated with slow moving, water-courses. People at risk are those that work on or near water, or with cattle.

Prevention is from covering all wounds, cuts and grazes with waterproof plasters or surgeon's gloves and wash hands thoroughly after any contact with animals, water or other potential sources.

Symptoms are flu-like to begin with, often with persistent and severe headaches, leading to vomiting and muscle pains. Ultimately can lead to jaundice or meningitis. Seek medical help if these symptoms are apparent and warn that you may have been in contact with Weil's disease.