

Dear Doctor,

**RE: Lyme Disease Risk**

**The person presenting to you has been on a Forest School Camp where ticks have bitten people.**

Forest School Camps are wilderness camping holidays on pastures and woodlands where ticks are commonly found. There is a risk of contracting Lyme Disease from bites from infected ticks when they bite and stay attached.

We take practical precautions at camp to minimise the risk of being bitten, and try to remove ticks promptly, but it is possible for a person not to know that they have been bitten or have had a tick attached. Facilities on our camps to inspect for ticks are limited (no electricity, no running water). Cases of Lyme Disease are increasing across the UK, and our own experience has seen an increase in the number of confirmed cases of Lyme disease among our camping staff and children in the last few years.

Some of our staff and families of our child campers have found it tricky to obtain early treatment for suspected Lyme Disease (who have gone on to have the diagnosis confirmed). Please take this **letter as confirmation that the conditions on this camp means that exposure to tick bites is known and definite.**

**There are useful links to Lyme Disease identification and management guidance below. In summary;** a spreading rash appearing some days after a known tick bite (but no rash in 30% of cases) or other symptoms of suspected Lyme Disease, should be treated with appropriate antibiotics without waiting for the results of a blood test. Blood tests can be carried out to confirm the diagnosis after a few weeks, but these can be negative in the early stages of the infection. Arrange re-testing for Lyme disease if it is still suspected after a first negative test result.

**Experience shows that if the classic erythema migrans rash or systemic illness follows a confirmed tick bite when camping it is best to consider starting appropriate antibiotic treatment prior to awaiting the often unreliable and complex serology tests.**

General information on ticks and identification of Lyme disease can be found at:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/552740/Ticksandourhealthinfoabouttickbites.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/552740/Ticksandourhealthinfoabouttickbites.pdf)

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/463701/LymeDisease\\_SignsAndSymptoms.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/463701/LymeDisease_SignsAndSymptoms.pdf)

<http://www.lymediseaseaction.org.uk/>

(With guidance and support for health professionals as well as the public)

Specifically for health professionals:

<https://cks.nice.org.uk/lyme-disease>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/lyme-disease-diagnosis-and-treatment>

Public Health England Suggested referral pathway:

[http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140714085912/http://www.hpa.org.uk/webc/HPAwebbFile/HPAweb\\_C/1317141297288](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140714085912/http://www.hpa.org.uk/webc/HPAwebbFile/HPAweb_C/1317141297288)

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Angharad Walters

Medical Advisor Forest School Camps