

Lyme disease information given to parents before camp

2018 Programme

Ticks are becoming more common on most sites. In areas where ticks are known, we are encouraging campers to wear long sleeved t-shirts and long or waterproof trousers tucked into socks to minimize risk of tick bites and tick-borne diseases, such as Lyme disease. Wearing insect repellants containing saltidin or citridiol which are available at chemists or outdoor suppliers, is also encouraged. Some insect repellents specifically mention that they are active in repelling ticks. All camps are provided with tick removers. More detailed information on this topic will be provided by your camp organiser and will be available on the web site.

Each Pre Camp Circular will contain this paragraph:

There is a rise in the number of ticks at some of our sites, which can occasionally lead to Lyme Disease infection. As a consequence we are heightening our precautions when camping in areas where ticks are prevalent. The illness is still relatively uncommon in the UK but is increasing. Those who work in the outdoors are rarely infected, even where their exposure to ticks is frequent. In the unlikely event that symptoms develop after camp, you are advised to seek local medical advice, mentioning Lyme Disease specifically. The most common symptoms are a flu-like illness, and a spreading red rash, centred on the site of the original bite, both developing between 3 to 30 days after the bite. Rarely, there are more serious long-term complications so if in doubt do visit your GP. If there are instances of tick bites at camp, your organiser will send out a letter after camp (and another letter to take to your child's GP if your child is unwell and you need to visit the GP)

Sent by organiser alongside precamp circular:

2. Lyme disease (Paragraph 2 of Medical Guidance C0-C6a)

Ticks are commonly found on the pastures and woodlands we use as camp sites. Numbers are increasing, and it is likely that a small proportion of the ticks will carry Lyme Disease. Cases of Lyme Disease are increasing across the UK. There is a small 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. Some Insect repellents can deter ticks when applied regularly (see kit list) and long sleeve tops and trousers may also help.

Lyme disease is potentially a serious illness which is why we feel it necessary to discuss the issue of checking for ticks.

The subject of ticks and the importance of avoiding Lyme disease will be discussed by staff at camp from the first day to raise awareness. We have a three step approach on camp:

Prevent: appropriate clothing, insect repellent and good practice at camp, e.g. not leaving clothes directly on the grass

Check: Preventative steps cannot be guaranteed to be effective so checking and removal are essential. Self checking for ticks wherever possible and aiming to do this everyday. Staff involvement where necessary (see below)

Treat: removal of ticks by staff and notes made in the first aid book. Follow up letter to parents and GP.

Checking for ticks

Children will be encouraged to check for ticks themselves. The difficult element is that ticks like to crawl into warm places such as groin creases and armpits, and hairline some of which cannot be seen easily by the person themselves.

We will encourage children to check themselves for ticks on a daily basis wherever possible. Staff will support this in an age appropriate way, reminding and helping them to check harder to see areas. We will check children for ticks in

hard to see areas with their agreement only. If a tick needs to be removed from, or a child needs to be checked in, an intimate area, there will be 2 staff members present. From about 11 years old upwards, children will be checked for ticks by staff of their own gender.

We ask parents to discuss this specifically with their child before camp so that the child knows their parents/carers are on board with checking for ticks, and this is likely to happen on camp.

Staff will be clear and calm so as to avoid anxiety about Lyme disease, build awareness and make checking for ticks a routine part of camp life. Staff will stress that the removal of ticks within the first 24-48 hours reduces the risk of getting this disease and that also it can be treated very effectively in the early stages.

In the unlikely event that symptoms develop after camp, you are advised to seek local medical advice, mentioning Ticks and Lyme Disease specifically. The most common symptoms are a flu-like illness, and a spreading red rash, centred on the site of the original bite, both developing between 3 to 30 days after the bite. Rarely, there are more serious long-term complications so if in doubt do visit your GP. If there are instances of tick bites at camp, your organiser will send out a letter after camp (and another letter to take to your child's GP if your child is unwell and you need to visit the GP)

Reassuring children

If we take the necessary steps, we can reassure children that the chances of getting ill are very low.

There are many stages between a tick bite and getting Lyme disease

Being vigilant will hugely reduce the chance of a person becoming infected with the disease.

-If you are bitten by a tick, remember most are not carrying the bacteria

-If you do regular checks, a tick will be found and removed

-Remember if removed within 24 hours, there's much less chance of picking up the infection

After camp:

-If you see signs of a spreading rash and or flu like symptoms, go to a GP

-Antibiotic treatment is extremely effective with the first signs of Lyme disease

-Doctors can also carry out a test to see if a person has picked up the infection

If these steps are followed, the chances of the disease are extremely low. Untreated, Lyme disease can be very serious, hence this whole approach.