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Lyme Disease: Awareness and Precautions in Wales

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Why do the research?



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- As the climate is changing the tick population is increasing and becoming more wide-spread in Wales
- If Lyme Disease is not detected early enough it can lead to serious health problems
- Some employees, including local authority staff are potentially at risk

Who is at risk?



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- Anyone who works in a risk zone may be a risk of contracting Lyme Disease
 - Environmental Health Officers
 - Pest Control Officers
 - Farmers
 - Forestry workers
 - Deer Handlers
 - Game Keepers
 - Etc.

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974



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- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act, Section 2 – ‘Duty of Care’ for employers to protect the ‘health, safety and welfare’ of their employees
- Section 3 – ‘Duty of Care’ for employers and self employed persons to ensure that persons not in their employment are not exposed to risks to their health and safety

Survey and Methodology – Occupational Exposure



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- Survey of all 22 local authorities in Wales via email and telephone
- Survey of other organisations who employ people exposed to Lyme Disease – e.g. Forestry Commission, National Trust etc.
 - What information/protective equipment do you give staff exposed to Lyme Disease?

Results – Occupational Exposure



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- Two local authorities demonstrated awareness of the potential risk
 - Authority 1 – written risk assessment
 - Authority 2 – card given to exposed staff to give to GPs should the need arise
- Of the other organisations only the CCW have information in the form of a 'fact sheet'

Survey and Methodology – Recreational Exposure



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- 'Secret shopping' email was sent to general enquiries in all local authorities and organisations in Wales, posing as an inquiring member of the public

Results – Recreational Exposure



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- Fifteen of the local authorities responded – most referred to the BADA or other Lyme Disease website
- Of the organisations only the CCW provides information in the form of the same 'fact sheet' as for occupational exposure



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Findings

- Organisations and local authorities that have staff working in risk areas are not addressing the obligation arising under Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act
- Organisations and local authorities that own or manage land for recreational use are not addressing the obligation arising under Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act

Outcomes of the research



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- There is an increasing risk of being exposed to Lyme Disease, resources are needed to increase awareness.
- A leaflet has been produced providing detailed information about the disease specific to the occupationally exposed.
- A more generalised poster has been produced to put up in popular recreational areas to increase the awareness of those using the land for recreational purposes.

Leaflet



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- Aimed at the occupationally exposed
- On the back there is space for the employer to add their own message and logo should they want to
- Give to staff working in areas where they are likely to be exposed to Lyme Disease

Look out for ticks!!

- A bite from an infected tick can lead to Lyme Disease
- Tick bites are painless
- An average tick is about the same size as a poppy seed so can be easily missed

To remove a tick

- Do it as soon as possible
 - Make sure you remove the whole tick, including the head
 - DO NOT squash the tick or apply any creams or oils
-
- If you are worried or have any symptoms visit your GP
 - Lyme Disease can be effectively treated with antibiotics if caught early enough

For more information visit:

www.bada-uk.org

Sponsored by:



TICK ✓ THE RIGHT BOX!



General information about ticks

Lyme Disease is a serious disease carried by infected ticks

A tick is an insect that lives on blood meals, these are taken from animals - deer, sheep and dogs are the most common

Ticks normally bite when they are in the nymph stage, they need to take a blood meal in order for them to progress to adult stage

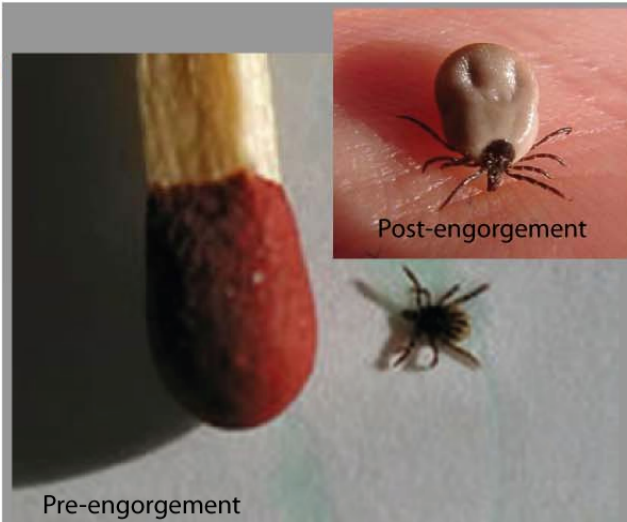
The seasons in which they are most active is spring and summer

Ticks acquire Lyme Disease when they bite and take a blood meal from an infected host.

Risk Zones

- Woods
- Long grass
- Undergrowth
- Moors and heath
- Parks

Lyme Disease can be acquired in both urban and rural locations



Source: www.bada-uk.org

Symptoms - these may develop in the first few weeks

- Bullseye rash - this is generally the first sign
- Tiredness
- Generally feeling unwell - flu-like symptoms
- Headaches
- Fever
- Aching muscles
- Stiff neck
- Swollen glands

More serious symptoms can affect:

- Nervous system - e.g. meningitis, encephalitis, bells palsy,
- Joints - arthritis,
- Heart

Who is at risk?

Anyone who works in a risk zone may be at risk of contracting Lyme Disease

- Forestry workers
- Farmers
- Game keepers
- Deer handlers
- Environmental Health Officers
- Pest Control Officers

How to keep safe

- Keep your arms and legs covered
- Try and stick to walkways/pathways
- Check your skin and clothes for ticks
- Wear light coloured clothing to make the ticks easier to see
- Remove ticks properly using either tweezers or a tick remover (*available at veterinary clinics or pet shops*)



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Poster

- Aimed at the recreationally exposed
- Space for personalisation
- Suggested locations
 - tourist information centres/boards
 - bunk houses/hostels
 - campsites
 - walking routes

Pre-engorgement



Post-engorgement



TICK THE RIGHT BOX!

Ticks can cause lyme disease

Precautions:

Keep your arms and legs covered

Try and stick to pathways

Check domestic pets for ticks

Check your skin and clothes for ticks

Wear light coloured clothing to
make the ticks easier to see

Remove ticks properly using either a
tick remover or tweezers

If you are worried or have any
symptoms visit your GP

Risk Zones

- Woods
- Long grass
- Undergrowth
- Moors and Heath
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Lyme Disease can be acquired in both urban
and rural locations

Insert
Logo



OVdesign



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Conclusion

- There is a risk to those working and using the land recreationally of being exposed to Lyme Disease
- Most Local Authorities and Organisations are not fulfilling their duty under HASAWA
- Resources have been produced to help provide information and raise awareness
- As the tick population continues to increase monitoring and recording must continue and further action may need to be taken in the future