



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

Rannan na nOspideil Gheamhíochaine  
Aonad 4A – Áras Dargan  
An Ceantar Theas  
An Bothar Mileata  
Cill Mhaighneann  
BÁC 8

Acute Operations  
Health Service Executive  
Unit 4A - The Dargan Building  
Heuston South Quarter  
Military Road  
Kilmainham  
Dublin 8.

15<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Deputy Holly Cairns

Dáil Éireann

Leinster House

Dublin 2.

**PQ 48141/21 RE: To ask the Minister for Health the steps he is taking to ensure the timely diagnosis and treatment of Lyme disease by medical professionals**

Dear Deputy Cairns,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Lyme is a tick borne infection that occurs when recreational or occupation activities result in tick bites from an infected tick. It is relatively rare with estimations that a small proportion of ticks in Ireland are infected (<5%).

The infection is known to be endemic in certain locations and in these areas the GPs are very familiar with the most typical presentation which is a rash, often with a bull's eye appearance. More complicated cases require referral to infectious diseases clinics.

The HSE's National Clinical Programme for Infectious Disease, was established in 2020 and is developing a workforce strategy to establish a network of infectious diseases clinics nationally. The Infectious Disease clinics operating in the public hospital system support the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) guidelines regarding the diagnoses and treatment of Lyme. Many hospital laboratories have the capacity to do Lyme serology (ELISA) locally and where not, referral of samples to the National Virus Reference Laboratory (NVRL) occurs. Confirmatory testing (western blot; an analytical technique in molecular biology and immunogenetics to detect specific proteins in a sample of tissue) is referred to Porton Down which is the referral laboratory for the UK.

There are patients who have prolonged symptoms post Lyme diagnosis and treatment, or have persisting unexplained medical complaints. It is envisaged that the National Clinical Programme for Infectious Disease will adopt a multi-disciplinary approach to developing and establishing pathways of care to address this cohort of patients.

I trust this answers your question to your satisfaction.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Emma Benton', with a small flourish at the end.

**Emma Benton**

**General Manager**

**Acute Operations**