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Oifig an Stiúrthóir Náisiúnta Sláinte Poiblí

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BY EMAIL ONLY

21st July 2023

Deputy Holly Cairns
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

PQ - 34393 - To ask the Minister for Health the measures his Department is taking to improve the awareness and treatment of Lyme disease in Ireland.

Dear Deputy Cairns,

Thank you for your question. HPSC (Health Protection Surveillance Centre) is the HSE's and Ireland's specialist agency for the surveillance of infectious diseases. Disease surveillance involves the collection, analysis and understanding of information about diseases.

The following were identified in the document Primary Prevention and Surveillance of Lyme Borreliosis in Ireland (produced in October 2019), as key elements of strategy for tick and Lyme awareness: The general public should have access to simple key health information on ticks, preventing tick attachment and Lyme disease. This information should have a single source so that the likelihood of mixed messages or inaccurate information is minimised. The media (including social media) should be used to ensure widespread transmission and penetration of these messages. Simple messages should be reinforced at regular intervals through the use of social media. Media and other events should be intensified at the beginning of each tick biting season to bring the issue to public awareness.

Although cases of Lyme borreliosis are reported throughout the year infection is more commonly diagnosed during the summer season, coinciding with tick activity and high levels of outdoor human activity that may result in tick exposure. HPSC has been regularly posting seasonal information on Lyme for the general public and healthcare professionals. Both HPSC and Tick Talk Ireland also provide guidance on protection against contracting Lyme disease and the HPSC runs a Lyme disease awareness raising campaign with a Tick Awareness Day involving press releases and media interviews in May each year.

Information provided by HPSC on www.hpsc.ie is reviewed and updated on a regular basis. The website covers topics for both healthcare professionals and the general

public. The HPSC website provides free materials for printing including posters and leaflets. Information is targeted for specific risk groups e.g. children.

Information for the general public:

- Lyme Disease: Factsheet for the general public
- Prevent tick bites and Lyme Disease: leaflets and posters
- Laboratory testing for Lyme Disease: Factsheet for the general public

Information for clinicians and other healthcare professionals:

- Lyme factsheet for health practitioners
- Erythema migrans diagnostic support tool
- Prevention and control of tick-borne disease in Europe
- Case definition for notification of Lyme neuroborreliosis
- Clinical management of Lyme borreliosis consensus statement
- Erythema migrans slide image set
- Results of a laboratory survey on *Borrelia burgdorferi* diagnostic methods in Ireland

In addition, the HPSC website hosts links to useful Lyme borreliosis resources from international public health bodies such as the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), UK Health Security Agency and the Royal College of General Practitioners.

I hope this answers your query. If you require any further information or clarification please do contact us.

Your sincerely



Dr John Cuddihy
National Director Public health