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BY EMAIL ONLY

Deputy Shane Moynihan
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

26th May 2025

PQ 26143/25- To ask the Minister for Health if she will improve access to accurate testing and adequate treatment for Lyme disease and coinfections to prevent long-term chronic illness in patients; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Moynihan,

Thank you for your representation. Lyme disease is a tick-borne infection that occurs when recreational or occupational 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, GPs are familiar with the most typical presentation, which is a rash, often with a bull's eye appearance. More complicated cases require referral to infectious disease clinics.

Diagnosis and treatment are in line with national and international best practice guidelines, as outlined in Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) guidelines¹ that have been endorsed by the Infectious Diseases Society of Ireland (IDSI)².

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.

Patients with post-Lyme syndrome can be referred by their GP to a public hospital infectious disease clinic in Ireland for further management as appropriate.

I hope this provides you with some assistance.

Yours sincerely

Sharon Hayden
General Manager
Office of the Chief Clinical Officer



References:

1. Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA)
<http://www.idsociety.org/>; <https://www.idsociety.org/practice-guideline/lyme-disease/>
2. Infectious Diseases Society of Ireland (IDSI)
<https://www.idsociety.ie/about-the-idsi/links>