

# Stay safe this summer

## Hints and tips from NHS Ayrshire & Arran's Health Protection team on staying safe this summer

With the summer holidays approaching, we want to remind you of some key health protection messages: handwashing; food safety; ticks; and bird flu.

### Hand washing:

**Always wash your hands before eating or drinking.**

The best way of protecting yourself is by **washing your hands thoroughly with soap and water**. This should be done **before eating, drinking** or doing anything else that brings your hands into contact with your mouth; as well as **after using the toilet**.

Parents, and those looking after young children, should supervise children while they are washing their hands to ensure they do so properly.

A number of germs, such as Cryptosporidium and E.coli, are commonly carried by farm animals. So, it's really important to **wash hands thoroughly before eating or drinking and after contact with animals or the places where they're kept**. This is particularly important when visiting petting farms or when feeding lambs or other animals.

Watch this short video which explains how to wash your hands properly:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9hCY-MldMA>



### Food safety:

**Always ensure meat is thoroughly cooked.**

Summer is a great time to enjoy a BBQ with family and friends. However, it is important to stay safe so you can avoid food poisoning.

**Don't leave meat outside of the fridge** for long periods, and make sure meat is **cooked thoroughly**. Wash your hands **before** preparing food and **after** handling raw meat. This helps to prevent bacteria from spreading too.

Learn more about BBQ food safety here:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/bbq-food-safety>



## Ticks:

### Make sure you know how to avoid and remove ticks.

In Scotland, a small proportion of ticks may carry bugs and germs that cause illnesses, including Lyme disease.

Ticks are small spider-like creatures that can be found on bushes and undergrowth in Scotland's countryside, parks and gardens from spring through summer and well into autumn.

There are some precautions you can take: **be tick aware; try to avoid being bitten by ticks; and remove any ticks that do bite as quickly as possible.**

To avoid being bitten by ticks, cover up bare skin with long trousers and long sleeves when in outdoor green spaces. Using insect repellents also helps.

It's really important to check for ticks after spending time outdoors. If you do discover a tick attached to you or someone who you're with, it's important to remove them quickly. Removing attached ticks quickly using a specially designed tick removal tool greatly reduces the likelihood that they can pass any bugs on to you.

You can find more information and advice on NHS Inform:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/injuries/skin-injuries/tick-bites>



## Bird flu:

### Don't pick up dead birds.

We know that Scotland's seabird populations were affected by avian flu last year.

The risk of humans getting avian flu in the UK is low, but is still possible. Therefore, you should be cautious if you come across dead birds. **Don't touch dead or sick birds**, unless you are wearing suitable protective clothing and know how to use it.

Report any sightings of dead or sick birds to the relevant local authority:

- East Ayrshire: 01563 576000
- North Ayrshire: 01294 310000
- South Ayrshire: 0300 123 0900




**Wishing you a wonderful and infection-free summer holiday from NHS Ayrshire & Arran's Health Protection Team.**

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