

Health Risk Advice - Easter Barn at Becketts Farm

Avoiding infection on farm visits

Visiting a farm is an enjoyable and educational experience for many people, however such visits can never be free from all risks. Farm animals may naturally carry a number of infections that can be harmful to people. Especially vulnerable are children, the elderly and pregnant ladies. By understanding the risk and following advice on prevention we can limit the risk to health.

The bacterial infection E. coli O157 is a particular health risk. Many animals can carry E. coli O157 infection even when they appear clean and healthy. When an animal is infected the bacteria will be in the animal's droppings and may be on the animal's body, fences and surfaces around the farm.

Here at Becketts Farm we take utmost care in both caring for our animals and in ensuring that animal areas are kept clean and tidy. We ask that you take the following simple precautions to help keep you and your children safe from infection:

- X** DO NOT put hands on faces or fingers in mouths while petting animals
- X** DO NOT kiss farm animals nor allow children to put their faces close to the animals
- X** DO NOT eat, drink or smoke whilst around the animals
- X** DO NOT eat anything which has fallen on the floor and do not reuse any dummy that has fallen on the floor without thoroughly sterilising
- X** DO NOT use sanitiser gel or wipes instead of washing hands with soap and water as this will not be sufficient to remove E. Coli O157

- ✓ DO wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before eating or drinking
- ✓ DO remove and clean boots and shoes that may have become soiled and clean pushchair wheels. Then wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water
- ✓ DO supervise children to ensure that they wash their hands thoroughly

Advice for pregnant ladies

Women who are pregnant are potentially at risk of acquiring certain infectious diseases from pregnant livestock including sheep. Pregnant women who come into close contact with sheep during lambing may risk their own health and that of their unborn child, from infections which can occur in some ewes. These include chlamydia (enzootic abortion of ewes – EAE), toxoplasmosis and listeriosis, which are common causes of abortion in ewes, and Q fever. Although these infections are uncommon and the number of human pregnancies affected by contact with sheep is extremely small, it is important that pregnant women are aware of the potential risks. We will not be having any pregnant ewes at the event, but there may still be some risk from the lambs. Every effort is made to ensure high standards of cleanliness and hygiene in the animal farm at all times. For any pregnant women thinking about visiting the Becketts Farm Easter event we would ask that you do so at your own discretion.