

Gardening health discussion paper

Note the absence of a comprehensive compilation of information specifically relevant from a user's perspective.

Health care delivery not familiar [less familiar than ever before] with pattern of problems presented from gardening context. Similar to sports injuries/ advice/ recommendations [e.g. Warm-up].

Two main aspects

1. Promote good health

Diet

Nutrition

Exercise

Motivation

2. Avoid ill-health

Prevention / avoidance of major trauma[e.g. Mechanical injury] and gradual dis-ease [e.g. Repetitive strain]

Maximise safety

Precautions [e.g. Tools safety talk]

Employment/ contract law obligation to promote safety binding contracts/ insurance for voluntary too

Union representation to improve / guarantee working conditions

Minimise dangers

Onsite interpretation

In emergency: nearest phone/ transport/ help/ doctor's surgery/ hospital less accessible greater incentive to avoid trauma.

Solitary individual self-reliant.

Group justifies/ requires extra precautions/ provision commensurate with the size of the group and the vulnerability/susceptibility of the individuals involved. Trained first aider for 6-12 people+.

Contents of first aid kit

Cleansing/ antiseptic ointment witch-hazel / distilled water/ calendula

Minor wounds bandages/ dressings/ plasters/ cotton-wool

Shock e.g. Hypericum [500]

Bruising e.g. Arnica

Major wounds tourniquet

Common sense avoidance [measures]

Mechanical injuries/ carelessness/ inattention e.g.

Cuts/ falls

Repetitive stress injuries / over long time period / seasonal e.g.

Blisters/ backache/ arthritis

Exposure to sun/ heat/ cold / wet / windchill e.g. Sunburn/ heatstroke/
hypothermia/ colds/ pneumonia

Potential causes of ill-health

Tetanus [lockjaw/ jaundice] 50% mortality [world-wide
average]

Soil-borne infection. Most likely from deep cuts. Transmission high from old,
rusty metal. Transmission possible from animal manures

Cold symptoms for 5-10 days. Nerve endings progressively die.

Treatments: inoculation renewed every 5-7 years or antidote administered
immediately after exposure standard practice in likely cases

Weil's disease[leptospirosis/ infectious jaundice] 5-10% mortality

Transmitted by contact with/digestion of water contaminated by rat or dog
urine

Symptoms:high fever [39+deg. C] developing hepatitis/meningitis-like.

Treatment: erythromycin antibiotics / penicillin available

Cholera/ typhoid fever

Ingestion of water contaminated by faecal matter

Avoid stagnant water / runoff and leachate from contamination sources

Gastro-enteritis [digestive infection]

Water-borne e.g. cryptosporidium

Animal to human transferred diseases:

Pig diseases and manure very similar to human

Salmonella handling poultry manures and byproducts symptoms latent or suppressed in animal

Bse to cjd ingestion of infected material

N.b. aids virus: incapable of survival outside of human body for more than 24 hours.

Fungal infections candida / thrush

Bee sting barbed hook. Knock/ scrape off poison sack which continues pumping after bee removed.

Symptoms: blood vessels dilate / swelling / puffy skin / senses impaired

Whole body defence abreaction possible in some individuals, for whom consequent stings could be lethal.

Treatments: antidotes / noradrenaline injections / test susceptibility

Wasp sting poison injection hypodermically

Causes inflammation / irritation

Short-lived pain [30 minutes] + minor bruising [12 hours]

Insect bites

Snake bites

Carcinogens

Avoid inhaling spores of moulds[warm weather] / bracken [july to august]

Pollution:

Soil contaminants e.g. Glass/metal

Biocides asbestos/biocides

Soil poisons mercury/lead/chromium/cadmium

Plants will indicate excesses by symptoms or necrosis. Dangerous if large amounts of soil eaten.

Atmospheric /airborne pollution

Vehicle emissions carbon monoxide/nox/particulates

Minimum 10m/30 feet from busy road. Shelter belts/ trees/ hedging

Incinerators/ plastic,tyre and factory fires dioxins

Water pollution fluoride/ industrial effluent/sewage etc.

Biosphere

Immune deficiencies and hypersensitivity

e.g. hayfever/asthma/excema

Increased exposure to u-v radiation e.g. melanomas

Environmental proliferation causing genetic adaptations, resistant to biocides / antibiotics.

Overexertion haemorrhoids

Tips

Wash produce in clean [or running] water

Cycle possible sources of contamination several through as many separate cycles as possible e.g. Heat in compost turned

Avoid liquid from manures running into consumed supply