

Elmbridge U3A - Health and Safety When Walking

When walking with us, you do so at your own risk and are responsible for your own health and safety and for judging whether you are sufficiently fit to do the walk. You are also responsible for observing any current government guidance.

We are happy with well behaved dogs but remember that you are entirely responsible for them. Walking with a dog needs care. The owner has legal liability. A dog off the lead on a narrow path can get under the feet of walkers and potentially trip them up. On roads, crossing railway lines and in fields with animals, dogs must be on the lead. However, occasionally cattle will try to attack a dog and if, and only if, this happens, it is recommended that the dog be taken off the lead to protect the other walkers from being hurt.

If you have not met the leader on a previous walk, please introduce yourself to him or her at the walk start and give your name and EU3A membership number and if, as is preferable, you have one with you, your mobile number.

You are expected to follow advice given by the walk leader and stay behind him/her throughout the walk.

If you have a recurrent sudden medical condition such as asthma, diabetes or epilepsy please advise the walk leader on the day, giving advice on any immediate treatment that may be required and whether you carry medication with you. Store an emergency contact in the address book on your mobile under ICE (In Case of Emergency), or on a readily accessible card.

In Winter or wet weather, wear boots with at least one pair of thick socks. In Summer strong trainers are acceptable.

You should always carry drink with you - with more in hot weather - and also carry a snack. If you can, listen to the area forecast and if rain is expected bring rainwear. In hot weather, bring sunhat, sun cream, and insect repellent to prevent burning and bites. It is sensible to carry a few small first aid items for scratches, blisters and insect bites such as antiseptic, plasters and antihistamine cream.

Observe the Highway Code when on roads. In particular, use a pavement if possible. Otherwise walk in single file on the right, except around blind bends before which you should cross to the other side. Be very careful crossing busy roads – find a safe place and take your time, the leader will wait. On railway crossings, look both ways down the track, listen before crossing, and shut gates behind you.

All gates which were closed when the group arrived should be shut by the last person going through. Where there is an electrified fence across the path which needs to be opened, the leader will do this. Our main hazard is occasional wobbly or slippery stiles. These need care,. Take time and always use your hands as much as possible to support you. Another hazard can be cattle: give bulls a wide berth and don't get between a cow and its calf.

Whenever possible, proper toilets should be used. If not possible, as is often the case, keep well away from streams, and put paper in a plastic bag and carry out. If you do have to "dive off into the bushes" make sure someone else know that you have done so or risk getting left behind.

If having a packed lunch, hand washing facilities are rarely available so you may wish to carry wet wipes.

Ticks are endemic in UK and are particularly active in Spring and Summer. They are small, dark and in the spider family. They sometimes transfer to walkers brushing against grass, although their main hosts are deer, cattle and sheep. A proportion of ticks carry infections including lyme disease which is serious. You can reduce the likelihood of a tick attaching by wearing long trousers and shirts, tucking trousers into socks and using a Deet repellent. When showering/bathing after walking, automatically check your skin for ticks. If you do find one firmly attached to your skin, use tweezers or a tick remover very close to the skin, pulling firmly and steadily until it comes out, then wash and disinfect skin. disinfect skin. If it breaks, or if you subsequently get a rash round the point of attachment, see your doctor. For further information see <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Lyme-disease/Pages/Introduction.aspx>