

HAVE YOU HAD ANY NASTY INSECT BITES??

IS BLANDFORD BLACK FLY TO BLAME??

This fly is now common in the Cherwell valley area, particularly near to flowing water, usually rivers. Don't worry it isn't common around garden ponds. It is only 2mm long, but its saliva can cause a lot of skin irritation when it bites us! The skin problems usually settle in a few days, but can be very uncomfortable and occasionally become infected. They do **not** cause any serious illness or transmit any diseases.

Unlike mosquitoes, the Blandford fly usually bites during the middle of the day, less in the evening. It can only fly to 50cm, so the bites are usually found below the knee. They are only around in May and June.

How to prevent bites.

If you know your area is one where the Blandford fly may lurk, then wear long trousers with socks.

You may even need to tuck trousers into socks, or wear wellies!

Insect repellent may help too.

Take care when outside in the middle of the day during May and June.

How to treat bites.

Keep the skin clean.

Try antihistamine tablets and steroid creams, such as hydrocortisone, which you can buy from a pharmacy.

Avoid scratching the bite- although it may be very itchy - because you may damage the skin and allow bacteria to get in.

If the red area spreads consider speaking to the practice nurse or doctor.

Dr Lisa Ibbs