

Sewage and fishing

We all know about what is being dumped in our rivers – daily. It makes us angry as the healthy habitat we need for successful and sustainable fishing is being degraded each and every day.

However there is another more immediate consideration. If we are fishing in water carrying sewage related bacteria it is almost impossible for us to avoid getting some of this on our hands, and we tend to eat, may have cuts or grazes on our skin and what we hoped would be an enjoyable day out could so easily have a very nasty outcome.

On Monday 24 June I was doing my usual voluntary work with colleagues. One of them Catherine goes fly fishing with her husband and the previous week she had been off in Dorset fly fishing. She was now back, but her husband is now in hospital having picked up a sewage related bacteria (E Coli), which the hospital says is almost 100% likely to have come from the river. Perhaps he inadvertently put line in or near his mouth, or picked up food with a hand which would almost certainly have touched line, fly net or fish. Happily he's out of the woods now but a salutary warning to all of us.

The Angling Trust (AT) has recently updated its guidance, reproduced below:

1. Never put wet lines in your mouth or any other items of tackle that have been in the water.
2. Wash your hands with soap and water or use a sanitiser before eating and after fishing.
3. Cover any cuts and grazes with waterproof plasters before fishing.
4. Clean any wounds as soon as possible and wear protective clothing.
5. If you do fall in, keep your mouth closed and avoid drinking water.
6. Shower as soon as possible if you've been in potentially infected water.

I have now packed a small dispenser of hand sanitiser in my gear. Over cautious? Perhaps, but what have I got to lose?