

Medicinal leech

(*Hirudo medicinalis*)



For more information
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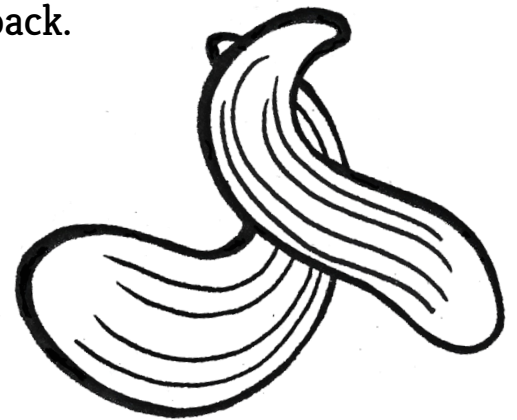
Description: Dark coloured cylindrical body with thin green, yellow and red stripes along their back.

Number of jaws: 3

Size: Up to 20 mm

Habitat: Shallow ponds and ditches

Food: Amphians (frogs, newts etc.), mammals, fish and birds



Medicinal leeches are one of the largest leeches in the UK, and the only native leech that drinks mammal's blood. These leeches are parasites, as they take blood but generally leave their host (mammals, amphibians or birds) alive. Historically, medicinal leeches were believed to cure a whole range of illnesses. Lab breed leeches are still used in medicine today. Wild medicinal leeches are now only in a few locations due to habitat loss and worming treatments.

