

Leptospirosis

Information for Owners

What is leptospirosis?

Leptospirosis is a disease of domestic and wild animals and humans that is caused by a spiral shaped bacteria. This disease can occur any where in the United States.

How is leptospirosis spread?

Leptospirosis is spread through the **urine of infected animals**.

Water, soil, or objects (dog bowls, bedding, pools) can become contaminated with urine from infected animals and spread bacteria to others. The bacteria can infect animals through mucous membranes (eyes, nose, or mouth) or cuts in the skin.

Is my dog at risk?

Dogs at **highest risk** for disease are those that frequently have interactions with other dogs or wildlife. This includes dogs that visit boarding facilities, dog parks, hunt, or roam farm land.

However, all dogs are at risk of disease as it is found in the environment.

What are signs of leptospirosis in my dog?

Dogs may initially show non-specific signs such as inappetence, lethargy, back pain, abdominal pain, or gastrointestinal upset (vomiting or diarrhea).

Some dogs may have urinary tract infection signs such as increased frequency of urination, urinating small amounts, or blood in urine.

The bacteria can cause mild to severe signs of disease, with severe cases resulting in kidney and/or liver failure.

Can humans get leptospirosis?

Yes. Humans can become infected with the bacteria in the same ways as dogs. Initial signs may mimic flu-like illness. (See attached pamphlet from the Wyoming Department of Health for more information).

How do I prevent leptospirosis in my dog?

1. **Vaccination** for the disease is the best form of prevention and is recommended for all dogs. Please contact your veterinarian for information on vaccination.
2. Rodent control can decrease likelihood of contamination of household areas with rodent urine.
3. Avoid sources of standing water outdoors during seasons of disease spread (summer and fall).

References

1. Sykes JE et al. 2010 ACVIM Small Animal Consensus Statement on Leptospirosis: Diagnosis, Epidemiology, Treatment and Prevention. Available at:
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3040842/pdf/jvim0025-0001.pdf>
2. Center for Food Security and Public Health. Leptospirosis: Fast Facts. 2013. Available at:
https://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/FastFacts/pdfs/leptospirosis_F.pdf

