

Leptospirosis



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What is leptospirosis?

Leptospirosis is an infectious disease found in urban, suburban, and rural environments across the US. The disease is caused by spiral-shaped bacteria called leptospires that live in water or warm, wet soil.

The spread of leptospirosis puts virtually every dog, from the biggest breeds to toy-sized terriers—and even you—at risk!



What are the signs of leptospirosis?

The signs of leptospirosis in dogs can vary. Some infected dogs do not show any signs of illness, some have mild illness and recover, while others develop severe illness, which can even result in death. Signs of leptospirosis in your dog can include¹:

- Fever ●
- Muscle tenderness ●
- Increased thirst ●
- Changes in urination ●
- Vomiting and diarrhea ●
- Loss of appetite ●

RATS, SQUIRRELS, RACCOONS, OPOSSUMS,
and other rodents can all be carriers
of leptospirosis.^{2,3}



How serious is leptospirosis?

Leptospirosis can have life-threatening effects on the kidneys, liver, brain, lungs, and heart. Even dogs that recover may still be at risk for chronic kidney failure.⁴

80% TO 90%

OF DOGS WITH LEPTOSPIROSIS



develop short-term, but serious kidney problems that may put them at risk of **chronic kidney failure.**⁵

How does leptospirosis spread?

BOTH ANIMALS AND HUMANS CAN BECOME INFECTED WITH LEPTOSPIROSIS.

The bacteria that cause leptospirosis are spread through the urine of infected animals, which can get into water or soil and survive there for weeks or months.³ The bacteria enter the body through the eyes, nose, mouth, or through a cut or scratch.²

If the bacteria reach a dog's kidneys or bladder, the dog may become a carrier, spreading the bacteria each time it urinates.

THE SIGNS AREN'T EASY TO SPOT.

Your veterinarian will likely do a blood or urine test to diagnose the disease.



What dogs are at risk of leptospirosis?



RURAL DOGS

Dogs that work, hunt, or play in the great outdoors, or are in contact with livestock



SUBURBAN DOGS

Dogs that share backyards and neighborhoods with wildlife



URBAN DOGS

Dogs that walk on public sidewalks, visit dog parks, or explore communal areas

Protect yourself and your family.

If your dog becomes infected with leptospirosis, do not handle or come in contact with the urine before your dog has received treatment.

Use rubber gloves when handling urine or cleaning your dog's bedding, housing, and surrounding areas.⁶



How can I protect my dog from LEPTOSPIROSIS?



LIMIT EXPOSURE TO RODENTS

Keep rodents (rats, mice, and other pests) under control. Maintaining a rodent-free environment will drastically decrease the threat of leptospirosis to your dog.



- **Vaccination can help protect your dog against leptospirosis, even if they are exposed to the bacteria.**



AVOID STANDING WATER

Drain areas of standing water on your property where leptospirosis may thrive. Don't let your dog swim or play in slow-moving creeks or water sources where wild animals may swim, drink, or access.

CHECK OUT THE BACK COVER FOR A LEPTOSPIROSIS PROTECTION CHECKLIST.



Assess your dog's risk of leptospirosis.

Does my dog really need to be vaccinated against leptospirosis?

You can lower your dog's risk of leptospirosis by limiting exposure to potential sources of contamination (stagnant water, rodents, poorly maintained canine facilities). The best way to protect your dog, however, is with an annual vaccination that protects against the major causes of leptospirosis.

Where can I learn more about leptospirosis?

Ask your veterinarian if you have further questions about leptospirosis or vaccination.

To find out more visit
StopLepto.com



Check **YES** or **NO**:

Does your dog have access to wetland areas, such as swamps, marshes, streams, lakes, rivers, drainage ditches, or sources of slow-moving or stagnant water?

YES
 NO

Does your dog roam rural fields, woodlands, suburban parks, or new housing developments where wildlife, such as deer, raccoons, opossums, skunks, and other animals may be present?

YES
 NO

Does your dog live in an urban environment and walk through puddles or areas of pooling water after it rains?

YES
 NO

Does your dog live in an area that experiences heavy rainfall or frequent flooding?

YES
 NO

**SHARE YOUR ANSWERS
WITH YOUR VET.**

If you answered **YES** to any of the above questions, it is likely that your dog would benefit from leptospirosis vaccination.

Leptospirosis prevention checklist

1

Make sure your dog is vaccinated against leptospirosis.

2

Drain areas of standing water on your property.

3

Don't let your dog swim or play in slow-moving creeks or in water sources accessible to wild animals.

4

Keep rodents (rats, mice, and other pests) under control.

5

Be aware of any changes in your dog's health or behavior. Watch for signs of leptospirosis and contact your veterinarian immediately if you see any.

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References: **1.** Leptospirosis. American Veterinary Medical Association website. Available at: <https://www.avma.org/resources/pet-owners/petcare/leptospirosis>. Accessed November 9, 2020. **2.** Infections in pets. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/leptospirosis/pets/infection/index.html>. Accessed November 5, 2020. **3.** Pets. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/leptospirosis/pets/index.html>. Accessed November 5, 2020. **4.** Lunn KF. Leptospirosis in dogs. Available at: <https://www.merckvetmanual.com/generalized-conditions/leptospirosis/leptospirosis-in-dogs#>. Accessed November 5, 2020. **5.** Sykes JE, Raegen KL. Leptospirosis in dogs: diagnosis, treatment, and management. Today's Veterinary Practice website. Available at: <https://todaysveterinarypractice.com/diagnosis-and-treatment-of-leptospirosis-in-dogs/>. Accessed November 5, 2020. **6.** Leptospirosis: prevention in pets. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/leptospirosis/pets/prevention/index.html>. Accessed November 9, 2020.

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