



Canine Leptospirosis & Your Health

Leptospirosis is a bacterial disease that can infect humans and many animals. Infected dogs may vomit, have diarrhea, and not want to move. Human disease occurs worldwide, but is uncommon in the U.S. (only 100-200 cases reported per year).



Rodent and wildlife control in and around your home will help keep you and your pet healthy.

Disease Highlights:

- **Transmission:** Infected animals spread the bacteria, which is in their urine. Humans get infected through direct skin contact or accidentally consuming water, food, or soil contaminated with animal urine.
- **Risk to Humans:** Worldwide, most cases occur in tropical or flooded areas after individuals are exposed to contaminated water. People at highest risk of illness include: children, pregnant women, people with weakened immune systems due to disease or medication, and people whose hobbies or occupations make them more likely to come in contact with animal urine (such as veterinarians, sewer workers, and gardeners).
- **Signs in Humans:** Infected people usually have no symptoms, but may develop flu-like symptoms, such as fever, headache, muscle aches, vomiting, and diarrhea.

If your pet is diagnosed with leptospirosis, reduce your risk of becoming ill by following these recommendations:

- Wear rubber boots, gloves, and eyewear when cleaning areas contaminated with animal urine.
- Bathe your animal if its fur becomes soaked in urine. Use a shampoo that is safe for animals and protect yourself by wearing rubber gloves and eyewear.
- Wash bedding and clothing contaminated with animal urine with the hottest laundry settings. Remember to wear rubber gloves while handling the contaminated items.
- Disinfect hard surfaces where your animal has urinated immediately with a fresh dilution of 10 percent bleach solution (add one part bleach to 10 parts cool water). Let the disinfectant sit for 10 minutes before wiping the surface clean. Disinfecting with bleach may discolor carpet and fabrics. If these items become contaminated, consult IDPH for further guidance. Avoid pressure washing to prevent breathing in the bacteria.
- Wash your hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds after touching animals and cleaning contaminated areas.
- Designate an area in your yard, away from other animals and children, for your pet's bathroom use. This area should be in direct sunlight and away from standing water. If solid surfaces become contaminated with urine, clean daily as outlined above.
- Follow your veterinarian's advice regarding your pet's care and give your pet all of its medicine.

If you have come in contact with an infected animal, call your health care provider. Monitor yourself for illness for at least four weeks and call your health care provider if you become sick or have questions. If your immune system is weakened due to disease or medication, or if you are pregnant, avoid all contact with infected animals.

For More Information Visit:

CFSPH Animal Disease Information at www.cfsph.iastate.edu/DiseaseInfo/fastfacts.php

CDC Healthy Pets Healthy People at www.cdc.gov/healthypets/

CDC Rodent Infestation Information at www.cdc.gov/rodents/

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