

Leptospirosis

What is Leptospirosis?

Leptospirosis is a bacterial disease found worldwide that affects humans and a variety of animals including dogs, cattle, pigs, and rodents. A spiral-shaped bacteria known as leptospire causes *Leptospira*.

How is it transmitted to people and animals?

The bacteria are spread through the urine of infected animals, which can contaminate water or moist soil. Infection of humans and animals occurs through contact with this infected urine or contaminated water or soil. The bacteria enter the body through wounds and abrasions on the skin, the mucous membranes (eyes, nose, and mouth), inhalation, and possibly ingestion of contaminated food or water.

What are the symptoms in humans?

In humans, leptospirosis causes a wide range of symptoms, with some infected individuals not showing any signs of the disease. Other individuals, however, may show symptoms such as fever, headache, chills, muscle aches, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal pain. If left untreated, leptospirosis could cause kidney failure, liver failure, meningitis, respiratory distress, and in rare cases even death.

What are the symptoms in animals?

In animals, the symptoms of leptospirosis are dependent on the animal species, with some animals not showing any symptoms. In dogs, signs include fever, vomiting, stiffness, muscle pain, anorexia, diarrhea, depression, abdominal pain, and kidney and liver dysfunction.

How is it treated?

Leptospirosis is treated with antibiotics, which should be given early to avoid severe organ damage and facilitate early recovery.

How can it be prevented?

Pet leptospirosis can be prevented through education and vaccination. Humans should avoid swimming or wading in contaminated water.

For more information go to:

- **Centers for Disease Control** Centers for Disease Control:
 - [/www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/leptospirosis_g.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/leptospirosis_g.htm)
 - [/www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/leptospirosis_g_pet.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/leptospirosis_g_pet.htm)
- **National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians** www.nasphv.org