



THE FACTS: LEPTOSPIROSIS & YOUR DOG

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Leptospirosis is a disease that can be contracted by any animal—**including people**. It's caused by infection with *Leptospira* bacteria, which is found everywhere in soil and water that has been contaminated with infected urine.

- **All dogs are at risk** for contracting leptospirosis, which is a potentially serious infection.
- Leptospirosis is a zoonotic disease, meaning that it **can be transmitted to people from animals**.
- Like other animals, **humans can also catch leptospirosis from their infected pets**, contaminated water sources, livestock, and wildlife.
- Symptoms of leptospirosis can be very subtle or even **show no signs at all**.
- **Early diagnosis and treatment are important** as the disease can lead to severe illness or organ failure if left untreated.
- **Leptospirosis can be treated with antibiotics**. By taking important precautions you can reduce the risk of infection for other people and pets in your household.



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Visit [cdc.gov/leptospirosis](https://www.cdc.gov/leptospirosis)

SYMPTOMS OF LEPTOSPIROSIS

While many dogs don't have noticeable symptoms at first, common signs may include the following:

- **Decreased appetite/not eating**
- **Increased drinking and urination**
- **Vomiting**
- **Diarrhea**
- **Weakness and depression**
- **Muscle pain, stiffness, doesn't want to move**
- **Conjunctivitis (red eyes)**
- **Difficulty breathing or coughing**
- **Jaundice**
- **Fever**



Your veterinarian will work with you to determine your dog's risk of contracting leptospirosis and will likely recommend a variety of diagnostic tests to determine whether your dog has the infection.

If your dog is showing signs of the disease, your veterinarian may also suggest starting treatment before a diagnosis is confirmed, because of the possible severity of the disease if left untreated.

TREATMENT OF LEPTOSPIROSIS

If your dog is displaying signs of the disease, be sure to contact your veterinarian as soon as possible. Your veterinarian will advise you on the best course of treatment for your dog. This may include supportive care, hospitalization, and treatment of your pet's specific symptoms.

Your veterinarian may also suggest proactively treating any other dogs in your household since they could have been exposed to the same contagion as your infected pet.

It's important to complete the course of prescribed antibiotics to ensure that the infection is properly eliminated, and to bring your dog back for all recommended follow-up testing.

HOW TO AVOID EXPOSURE WHILE YOUR DOG IS BEING TREATED

While there's a decreased risk of transmission from dogs on antibiotic therapy, it's important to take precautions.

- Avoid any direct contact with your dog's urine until the course of antibiotics is completed.
- Use a veterinarian-recommended disinfectant and wear gloves to clean up any urine-contaminated areas in the house or outside.
- Wash your hands thoroughly after handling your dog, his bedding, food, or water bowls.
- Avoid contact between your pet and anyone who is pregnant or has a compromised immune system until the course of antibiotics is finished.
- If you or anyone in proximity to your dog experiences flu-like or any other symptoms, consult your family physician as soon as possible—particularly if you're pregnant or have a compromised immune system.

PREVENTING LEPTOSPIROSIS

You can significantly reduce your dog's risk of getting leptospirosis with a yearly vaccine. Your veterinarian can advise you about the vaccination's risks and benefits.

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