



If my dog has leptospirosis, can I catch it?

Yes! Leptospirosis is a zoonotic disease, meaning that it can be transmitted to people from animals. Like pets, humans can also catch leptospirosis from contaminated water sources, livestock, and wild animals. Most outbreaks of leptospirosis in humans result from exposure to contaminated water.

People with leptospirosis may exhibit a variety of symptoms, including flu-like symptoms that may lead to liver or kidney disease. If you have any symptoms of illness, particularly if you're pregnant or have a suppressed immune system, contact a physician.

Ask your veterinarian about the benefits of a yearly vaccine that can decrease the likelihood of your dog developing leptospirosis.

5 simple tips for avoiding exposure during your dog's treatment

- ✓ Avoid direct contact with your dog's urine until the course of antibiotics is completed.
- ✓ Wash your hands thoroughly after handling your dog and his bedding, food, and water bowls.
- ✓ Wear gloves and use a veterinarian-recommended disinfectant to clean up all urine-contaminated areas.
- ✓ Minimize contact between your pet and anyone who is pregnant or has a compromised immune system until the course of antibiotics is finished.
- ✓ If you experience flu-like or any other symptoms, consult your family physician—especially if you're pregnant or have a suppressed immune system.

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*Leptospirosis – What is it
& Why Should I Care?*



Leptospirosis is found worldwide in not only wild animals but in domestic animals as well. It's caused by infection with *Leptospira bacteria*, which can be found worldwide in soil and water that has been contaminated with infected urine. The number of cases has been increasing worldwide due the increased urbanization and contact with wildlife hosts, such as raccoons, skunks, opossums, and rodents. In addition we know that globally, leptospirosis is the most widespread zoonotic disease (we are most concerned with this disease in our canine patients). As a result, small-animal practitioners around the world are becoming more vigilant about this infection.

How will I know if my dog has leptospirosis?

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 recommend starting treatment before a diagnosis is confirmed, because of the possible severity of the disease if left untreated. Leptospirosis can be difficult to diagnose. Presenting signs are often common with other disease processes, and while many dogs show no signs at all, common signs may include the following:

- ✓ Decreased appetite or not eating
- ✓ Fever
- ✓ Increased drinking and urination
- ✓ Muscle pain, stiffness, reluctance to move
- ✓ Weakness and depression
- ✓ Vomiting
- ✓ Diarrhea
- ✓ Conjunctivitis (red eyes)
- ✓ Dyspnea (difficulty breathing) or coughing
- ✓ Jaundice
- ✓ Organ failure (kidney or liver failure)



Fast Facts!

- ✓ All dogs are at risk for contracting leptospirosis, a potentially serious infection.
- ✓ Leptospirosis may show no signs at all. If signs do emerge, it can cause severe illness and organ failure.
- ✓ Early detection and treatment of infection is important for the best prognosis possible.
- ✓ Leptospirosis can be treated with antibiotics and you can reduce the risk of infection for others in your household.

Visit [cdc.gov/leptospirosis](https://www.cdc.gov/leptospirosis) to learn more about leptospirosis in people.
