

LEPTOSPIROSIS & YOUR PET



The truth about this deadly – but preventable – disease

There are very few diseases you can get directly from your pet, but one of them is especially easy to contract and can make your pet very sick: leptospirosis, a highly contagious illness spread through the urine of infected wildlife such as squirrels, raccoons, foxes, and rodents.

Our team has recently seen an alarming and deeply concerning uptick in leptospirosis cases. Pets don't even need to interact with wildlife to be infected—simply drinking water or ingesting dirt that's contaminated with their urine is usually how it happens.

While leptospirosis in cats is rare, some animal companions are at a higher risk than others. They include pets that:

- hike, wade or swim in natural bodies of water
- are exposed to flooded areas
- reside in suburban and rural areas where there is wildlife
- have frequent exposure to other dogs and dog urine at dog parks and boarding facilities

Symptoms of leptospirosis infection in both dogs and humans are similar and can include:

- Fever
- Vomiting
- Lethargy
- Shivering
- Diarrhea
- Jaundice (yellowing of skin and eyes)
- Muscle tenderness
- Dehydration
- Abdominal pain

Because of the prevalence of leptospirosis in our area – and given the seriousness of the condition – we are now recommending that any dog that spends time outdoors be vaccinated against the disease.

Leptospirosis infection is preventable! All your pet needs is a two-shot series, two-four weeks apart, followed by a yearly booster.

A leptospirosis shot is just one of what we often refer to as a “lifestyle vaccines,” meaning a vaccine that isn't mandated by law but is often strongly recommended based on your pet's daily routine and what he or she comes into contact with on a regular basis.

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