

# LEPTOSPIROSIS

## What is Leptospirosis?

Leptospirosis is a spirochete bacterium that is seen worldwide and is increasing due to the increasing population of wildlife in our towns and cities. City, suburban and rural dogs, which go outside, are at risk. The bacteria are carried in the bodies of wild animals and livestock. These rodents contaminate the ground, stagnant water or slow moving water by shading the bacteria in their urine. There are many different types but only a small amount of them cause disease in dogs.

## Why is Leptospirosis so significant?

Not only does this disease affect our pets and cause them to become very ill or even die, it is also a **ZOONOTIC DISEASE** which means that the disease can be transmitted to humans. An infected animal may even shed the bacteria to others for months even after being treated.

## What does this mean for my pet? What can be done?



The bacteria usually attack the liver and kidneys resulting in organ damage and even organ failure. Due to the difficulty in diagnosing the disease and the varying severity of clinical signs, these bacteria may infect dogs for some time before detection.

The patient is usually presented to us because they are drinking and urinating a lot. They may even be urinating blood. Some times the patient will have a fever, vomit and/or lethargic. Blood tests are done to check kidney and liver function and tests will be sent away to confirm the disease.

Meanwhile the patients kidney's will need to be supported by placing an I.V fluid line for usually 5-9 days of in hospital treatment depending on the severity. IV or oral antibiotics will also need to be administered.

Some cases will lead to severe long term kidney problems that must be supported with medications for the pet's entire life.

## Vaccination against the disease

Leptospirosis vaccine has become more common within the last few years. The vaccine covers 5 of the most common types of the bacteria commonly seen in dogs. Vaccinating is an easy an effective way to prevent this serious disease.