



# LEPTOSPIROSIS



**Leptospirosis** is a contagious illness caused by Leptospira bacteria, common in Guam's soil and still water. These bacteria spread through the urine of infected animals and can survive for a long time in tropical and warm damp areas. Infected individuals may experience liver and kidney damage, and severe cases can be **fatal**.

**How Can My Dog Get Infected?**

Leptospira bacteria, common in Guam, can enter your dog's body through the nose, mouth, eyelids, or cuts in the skin. Dogs often get exposed by contacting infected wildlife urine, contaminated soil, or stagnant water, such as ponds, rivers, and streams.

**How is this condition diagnosed?**

Leptospirosis is diagnosed by checking blood and urine. Since the signs can be nonspecific, additional screening diagnostics tests may be performed. Certain drugs can make leptospirosis test result in a false negative.

**How is this condition treated?**

Treatment is through antibiotics and supportive care. The severity of the dog's condition dictates how aggressive therapy needs to be. If the kidneys have started to fail, aggressive fluid therapy is necessary. If the patient is not eating, fluids and other medications such as gastroprotectants and anti-nausea medications may be required.

Prognosis is good if treated early and aggressively. Prognosis is guarded if an animal has severe disease as there can be irreversible organ damage (primarily the liver and kidneys).

- Clinical signs can include the following:**
- Lethargy
  - Depression
  - Loss of appetite
  - Vomiting
  - Fever
  - Increased thirst / urination



## Can people get Leptospirosis?

**Yes!**

Leptospirosis is **very common** in tropical climates like Guam and spreads through the urine of infected animals, contaminating water and soil. Humans and animals can get infected through contact with this, especially through cuts, eyes, nose, mouth, or by drinking or swimming in contaminated water.

Wild and domestic animals can spread the bacteria for *months or years*.

**If your dog spends time outdoors in Guam, vaccinate them for leptospirosis.**

*If your pet is diagnosed, take these precautions:*

- Clean indoor urine areas with disinfectant, wearing gloves.
- Encourage your dog to urinate away from standing water and areas accessible to people or animals.
- Wash your hands thoroughly after handling your pet.

These steps help reduce the risk of transmission and keep you and your pet safe.