



Leptospirosis is a disease that can put any dog at risk. Leptospirosis is a bacterial infection a dog (or other exposed animal or human) can contract through small cuts on the skin or mucus membranes. It can cause many symptoms that resemble other illnesses such as fever, refusal to eat, vomiting, diarrhea, depression, muscle pain/stiffness, and kidney and liver dysfunction. Here is what you need to know:

- Dogs can get it from ponds, puddles, ocean water, or mud contaminated with infected urine.
- Dogs that live in the city, who don't swim and are always on a leash can get it.
- There are "reservoir" animals (i.e. those that spread the disease that do not show sickness), including voles, rats, raccoons, opossums, skunks, and mice.
- Humans can get leptospirosis. Symptoms can include fever, headache, muscle aches, chills, and abdominal pain. Severe cases can be fatal.

Thankfully, leptospirosis can be treated with antibiotics, but early detection and treatment are needed to prevent organ damage. The disease is also preventable with vaccine. It is important to note here that leptospirosis seems to be re-emerging in Oregon. In Oregon in 2009, there were 14 reported cases in dogs. In 2012, there were 26 cases. This may be partially due to the fact that people stopped vaccinating for *Leptospira* as often, blaming it as the cause for some vaccine reactions or just trying not to over vaccinate. Newer vaccines seem to be more protective and less likely to cause adverse reactions. *Leptospira* vaccine is a combination of four strains most likely to cause disease in dogs. While it is possible for a dog to contact a different strain, vaccine still is our best method of protection. We urge you to make sure your pet is adequately vaccinated.

Please give us a call at Sequoia Veterinary Clinic if you have any questions about Leptospirosis. If you are not sure of your dog's vaccine status, just give us a call and we can help.