



What Are *Leptospira*?

- 🐾 *Leptospira* are a group of bacteria that live in the kidneys of wild animals and sometimes pets.
- 🐾 The bacteria are very skinny and shaped like spirals.
- 🐾 *Leptospira* can live in the pee of animals like rats, mice, skunks and raccoons, and in lakes, ponds, puddles and mud where these animals pee.
- 🐾 Pets (mostly dogs) and people can get very sick if they drink or get wet with water that has *Leptospira* in it, usually because a wild animal has peed in it.



Where Do *Leptospira* Come From?

- ◆ *Leptospira* come from the pee of animals who already have *Leptospira* in their kidneys.
- ◆ If the animal pees in water, like a puddle or lake, the *Leptospira* can live there for a long time.
- ◆ *Leptospira* die very fast when it is very cold or very dry.

How Do People And Pets Get *Leptospira*?

- 🐾 People usually get *Leptospira* from drinking or swimming in “dirty” water that has pee in it. Your pet can also get *Leptospira* from drinking or swimming in dirty water.
- 🐾 Sometimes the water might not look or taste dirty, but it takes only a very tiny amount of pee from an animal in the water to infect a person or pet.



How Do I Know If My Pet Has *Leptospira*?

- ◆ Dogs that get infected with *Leptospira* may not get sick at all, but sometimes they can get very sick or even die if they don't go to the vet right away.
- ◆ *Leptospira* very rarely make cats sick, and small pets like mice and hamsters won't get it if you keep them in their cages away from other animals.
- ◆ If your pet acts very tired, won't eat or is peeing a lot more than usual, tell an adult. Your pet might need to go to the vet.
- ◆ Your vet will check your pet to make sure there isn't anything else making him or her sick. Your pet may need to stay at the hospital for a while if he or she has *Leptospira*.



Can I Get *Leptospira* From My Pet?

Yes. *Leptospira* can sometimes be in your dog's pee, even if your dog doesn't look sick. If some of the pee gets in your mouth, or on your skin (especially if you have a cut), you might get sick. To make sure you don't get sick, this is what you should do:

- 👉 Always wash your hands well after you play with your pet.
- ✗ Don't touch anyone's face (including yours!) or touch any food until you've washed your hands.
- ✗ Don't touch your pet's bum, even if it looks clean.
- ✗ Don't let your dog drink from puddles, ponds or lakes.