

LEPTOSPIROSIS

What is Leptospirosis?

Leptospirosis is a serious zoonotic (transmitted from animals to humans), multiorgan disease of dogs, and many other animals.

Leptospirosis is caused by different types of *Leptospira* bacteria. The bacteria are shed in the urine of infected animals and are transmitted by direct or indirect contact. Rats are the main carriers of the disease. Dogs are infected either directly from contact with contaminated urine, or indirectly from contact with contaminated water e.g. drinking or swimming in catch waters and streams inhabited by infected rats. Symptoms of this disease can vary from mild signs like lethargy and depression to severe signs such as abdominal pain, jaundice, liver and kidney failure, and even death. Some dogs which are infected can go on to become carriers shedding the bacteria in their urine and posing a risk to human health.

Who is at risk?

All dogs, as well as humans are at risk. As such, it is important to protect animals from this disease through vaccination. Dogs frequenting the Peak, Pok Fu Lam or country parks may be at an increased risk if they drink from, or swim in, streams. Disease outbreaks often occur during or immediately following periods of heavy rain.

How is Leptospirosis Diagnosed?

Your vet might suspect Leptospirosis from your dog's vaccination history (overdue vaccinations), the symptoms you describe and a clinical examination. Blood tests may show damage to the liver and kidneys and changes in the numbers of white blood cells. Further analysis of the blood or urine may also indicate exposure to Leptospirosis.

How is Leptospirosis Treated?

Leptospirosis is a very serious disease in dogs, and despite treatment can be fatal or result in longterm damage. Severely affected animals require hospitalization and intensive care for appropriate therapy including specific antibiotic therapy, intravenous fluid therapy and in some cases blood transfusions. During treatment, infected animals should be isolated to prevent spread of the disease.

How to Prevent Leptospirosis?

Prevention through vaccination is far better than cure, although not all strains may be covered in the vaccination. It is important to vaccinate your dog on an annual basis to continue an optimum level of protection. However, studies have shown that protection in some cases can start to wane after 6 months and for this reason the SPCA recommends that animals that frequent high risk areas such as the country parks, the Peak and Pok Fu Lam are given booster vaccinations for Leptospirosis every six months. Your veterinary surgeon is the best person to advise you on this.

**PLEASE PROTECT YOUR COMPANION FROM THIS
SERIOUS DISEASE BY VACCINATING YOUR DOG**

鉤端螺旋體症

甚麼是鉤端螺旋體症

鉤端螺旋體症是一種嚴重的動物源性傳染病（即能由動物傳染人類）。該病能嚴重影響狗隻及其他動物的重要器官。

鉤端螺旋體症由不同種類的鉤端螺旋體細菌引起。受感染動物的尿液會含大量致病細菌，若動物直接或間接接觸含菌尿液便有可能受感染。老鼠為該類細菌的主要帶菌者。犬隻的感染主要經由直接接觸帶菌的老鼠尿液或間接接觸到受污染的飲用水或池水引起。輕微的病徵包括渴睡,精神低落，嚴重者會出現腹痛，黃疸，肝衰竭甚至引致死亡。部份帶菌犬隻會持續排出帶鉤端螺旋體的尿液，對人類健康造成威脅。

誰是較高風險族群？

犬隻和人類均有機會受鉤端螺旋體感染，所以有必要為犬隻作防疫接種。在山上或郊外運動或居住的犬隻的患病風險較高，會在溪澗飲水或游泳者更甚。該病較常在發生暴雨後的一段時間出現。

診斷

獸醫會根據防疫注射的歷史，病徵及臨床檢查作出推斷。病者的驗血報告一般會顯示肝腎功能受損及白血球數字過高。進一步的血液或尿液分析有機會可顯示鉤端螺旋體的跡象。

治療

鉤端螺旋體症乃嚴重的疾病。部份受感染狗隻即使得到治療後仍會因病情過重而出現永久性器官衰竭甚至死亡。嚴重患者一般需要留院觀察及接受深切治療，包括抗生素、靜脈滴注甚至輸血。治療期間患者需接受隔離以避免細菌傳播。

如何預防

預防勝於治療。現時一般的預防疫苗注射已包括上述兩種鉤端螺旋體亞型，因此每年的加強注射尤為重要。然而，最近的研究指接種一般疫苗後狗隻對鉤端螺旋體的免疫力會於接種六個月後漸下降。故此愛護動物協會建議為高風險的狗隻（在山上或郊外運動或居住的犬隻）每半年接種一次預防疫苗。如有疑問，請諮詢你的獸醫。

為預防這種嚴重的疾病，請為你的犬隻進行定期疫苗接種。