

LEPTOSPIROSIS

What is Leptospirosis?

Leptospirosis is a serious zoonotic (spread from animals to humans or vice versa), multi-organ disease of dogs, and many other animals including humans (Weils Disease). Leptospirosis is caused by different types of Leptospira bacteria which 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 stagnant waters and streams inhabited by infected rats.

What are the signs of Leptospirosis?

Signs of disease can be dramatic and come on suddenly. Symptoms vary from lethargy and depression to severe signs such as abdominal pain, jaundice, liver and kidney failure, and even death. Animals can die quickly before signs of disease have had time to develop. 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. If your vet diagnosis leptospirosis in your dog, you should seek advice from your doctor.

How is Leptospirosis Diagnosed?

Your vet will suspect Leptospirosis from your dog's vaccination history (overdue vaccinations), symptoms and clinical examination. Blood tests can show liver and/or kidney damage and changes in the white blood cells count. A PCR (DNA extraction test) of blood and urine will help to indicate the presence Leptospirosis.

How is Leptospirosis Treated?

Leptospirosis is a very serious disease in dogs, and despite treatment can be fatal or result in long term damage. Affected animals require hospitalisation and intensive care, treatment includes specific antibiotic therapy, intravenous fluid therapy, supportive care with drugs to stop vomiting and in some cases a blood transfusion. Infected animals should be isolated to prevent spread of the disease.

Will my dog get better?

Early detection of the disease and intensive medical therapy will give your dog a good chance of survival. However, some dogs do not survive despite medical care and early diagnosis. The disease appears to be more severe in those that have absent or incomplete vaccination against leptospirosis.

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 a minimum of every year for 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 frequenting high risk areas such as 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 a vaccination protocol for your dog.

**PLEASE PROTECT YOUR COMPANION FROM THIS SERIOUS
POTENTIALLY FATAL 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（即能由動物傳人或由人傳動物）。該病能嚴重影響狗隻及其他動物的重要器官。人類的感染稱為威爾氏病（Weils Disease）。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水源，如在停滯的死水或受帶病老鼠污染的溪澗游泳或飲水引起。

鉤端螺旋體症的病徵

病徵可以突如其來而十分嚴重。輕微的病徵包括渴睡、精神低落，嚴重者會出現腹痛、黃疸、肝臟或腎臟衰竭，甚至引致死亡。有狗隻甚至在病徵出現前猝死。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（如山頂、薄扶林、郊野公園）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可能因為直接吸入病菌而致病。該病較常在發生暴雨後的一段時間出現。因為鉤端螺旋體為可感染人類疾病，如閣下的動物曾經感染或確認為帶菌者，我們建議主人及家人應及早到家庭醫生作檢查。

診斷

獸醫會根據防疫注射的紀錄、病徵及臨床檢查作出推斷。病者的驗血報告一般會顯示肝臟或腎臟功能受損及白血球數字過高。獸醫亦可能建議抽取血液及尿液作聚合酶連鎖反應測試（PCR）以找尋鉤端螺旋體。

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。大部份受感染動物一般需要留院觀察及接受深切治療，包括抗生素、靜脈滴注、支援性藥物如止嘔、甚至輸血。治療期間患者需接受隔離。

治癒機會

及早診斷，深入治療，治癒的機會便會愈高。可是少部份狗隻即使得到早期診斷和治療仍會死亡。沒有接種疫苗或未全面接種疫苗的狗隻病情一般較嚴重。

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。

為預防這種嚴重或可致命的疾病，請為你的犬隻進行定期疫苗接種。