



LEPTOSPIROSIS

Leptospire spread throughout the entire body and reproduce in the liver, kidneys, central nervous system, eyes, and reproductive system. Soon after initial infection, the dog will develop a fever and a bacterial infection of the blood. The extent and severity of the bacterial infection and the effect on the organs will depend on your dog's immune system and its ability to eradicate the infection fully. The increase in antibodies, produced by the dog, should clear the Lepto, from most of the system. However, some can remain in the kidneys, reproducing there and infecting the urine.

Infection of the liver or kidneys can be fatal for animals if the infection progresses, causing severe damage to these organs.

Younger animals with less developed immune systems are at the highest risk for severe complications.

What Causes It

Leptospirosis (lepto) is a disease caused by a bacterium.

How Is It Transmitted

The main source of infection is via infected urine, or from contaminated water, soil or mud. Dogs that swim in, or drink from stagnant water, such as canals, are at risk, especially if there is a large rat population present.

There are many different strains associated with different host species. The two major strains of lepto are carried by dogs and rats; however it can also cause Weil's disease in humans.

Signs and Symptoms

Lepto causes:-

- vomiting
- fever
- increased thirst
- bloody diarrhoea
- jaundice.
- lack of appetite

- sore muscles and a reluctance to move

In severe infections dogs develop kidney and/or liver failure and will often die.

Treatment

Treatment involves antibiotics, intravenous fluids and supportive treatment. Less severely affected dogs can recover, but will carry the bacteria for months afterwards, and their urine is an infection risk both to other animals and to humans. Leptospirosis in humans can be fatal.

Prevention

The best prevention is to keep your dog away from stagnant water and canals.

If it is within your control, eradicate the rodent population.

There is a leptospirosis vaccine, but it does not give 100% protection, because it does not provide immunity against all strains of the disease.

Transmission of leptospirosis from pets to humans is primarily through direct or indirect contact with contaminated animal tissues or urine. It is necessary to be aware of this when handling an infected pet.