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Leptospirosis

Leptospirosis is a bacterial disease transmitted via urine from an infected animal. What usually happens is a raccoon, rat, or opossum will urinate in a puddle, a dog will come along and then drink out of the puddle. A dog could also have a scrape on his paw and then step on wet grass that was recently urinated on by an infected animal. The bacteria cause a systemic infection that usually presents as liver and/or kidney failure. Leptospirosis is a zoonotic disease, meaning that people can also be infected.

Is it preventable?

This vaccine is initially given as two injections 3-4 weeks apart and then yearly after that. If you hike with your dog, or believe that your dog is ever in an area with raccoons, then YES, your dog needs this vaccine!



MCHA offers this vaccine.

Check out details at www.monroehumane.org/minor-medical-clinics

Is it treatable?

Because the disease is caused by bacteria, it can be treated with antibiotics. The sooner your pet receives treatment, the better their odds of survival. Hospitalization and supportive care (such as fluids to treat kidney disease or acute kidney injury) can be extremely important. In addition, your veterinarian will need to address and treat your dog's specific clinical symptoms.

Is it fatal?

It can be. Unfortunately, leptospirosis infections may present with any of a number of rather vague, non-specific symptoms that can vary in intensity. Some of these may include: no signs of illness whatsoever (asymptomatic infection), decreased appetite or anorexia, fever, muscle pain, stiffness, reluctance to move, weakness, depression, vomiting, diarrhea, conjunctivitis (red eyes), dyspnea (difficulty breathing), coughing, jaundice, and organ failure (kidney or liver failure).

