



Indiana State Department of Health

Epidemiology Resource Center

Quick Facts

About...Leptospirosis

What is Leptospirosis?

Leptospirosis is a disease caused by bacteria called *Leptospira*. This disease is common in animals like dogs and rodents. Humans sometimes get the disease too.

What are the symptoms of Leptospirosis?

Symptoms appear 2 days to 4 weeks after becoming infected. Illness usually begins abruptly and may begin with fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, vomiting, or diarrhea. In rare instances, some ill people are at risk for kidney or liver failure or meningitis.

How is Leptospirosis spread?

Cases often come from water that has animal urine in it, such as ponds and streams. Some cases come from soil or food that has animal urine in it. You can get the disease by drinking the water, eating the food or coming into contact with soil that has the germ in it. Many different kinds of animals carry the germ, but some animals will show signs of disease while others will not. The disease is not known to be spread from person to person.

Who is at risk for Leptospirosis?

Anyone who works or plays in areas that put them into contact with water or soil that have animal urine in it.

How do I know if I have Leptospirosis?

If you think you may have Leptospirosis you should see a doctor to have your blood or urine tested.

How can Leptospirosis be treated?

Leptospirosis can be treated with antibiotics available from seeing a doctor.

How is Leptospirosis prevented?

You can lower your risk by using rodent control in and around your home, clean-up debris and standing water near your home, and vaccinate your pets. There is no human vaccine. You can also reduce your risk by not swimming or wading in water that might have animal urine in it.

All information presented is intended for public use. For more information, please refer to: <http://www.cdc.gov/leptospirosis/>

This page was last reviewed May 2015.