

# Leptospirosis in Dogs



ADHS



Maricopa County  
Department of Public Health

## What is leptospirosis?

- ◆ A bacterial disease that affects humans and animals, including dogs.
- ◆ Symptoms can vary and might include fever, decreased energy, lack of appetite, conjunctivitis, vomiting, and diarrhea, and might progress to more severe illness.

## How is it spread?

- ◆ In the urine and birthing fluids of infected animals.
- ◆ Dogs and people can be exposed to the bacteria through contact with contaminated urine, and urine-contaminated water, soil, bedding, or food.

## What is the risk to dogs and people?

- ◆ The bacteria can be shed intermittently in the urine of infected dogs, including those that are not showing signs of being sick. It can be spread from dog to dog and, rarely, to people. The bacteria can be present in a dog's urine for several months after recovery from illness if not properly treated with antibiotics. The shedding period can be shorter if the dog is treated with antibiotics.



## Recommendations

- Infected dogs should be placed in floor-level cages, if possible, and housed away from high-traffic areas to limit urine-contamination.
- Kennels should be clearly marked with warning label to alert people to the presence of a leptospirosis positive dog.
- Pregnant or immunocompromised staff should avoid contact with infected dogs.
- Staff should wear gloves when handling an infected dog, and additional protective equipment such as a face shield and a gown when cleaning up the dog's urine.
- Staff should wash their hands after handling an infected dog, the dog's urine, or anything that may have been contaminated by the dog's urine.
- Avoid pressure-washing areas where infected dogs are housed, to avoid aerosolization of bacteria.
- Infected dogs should be walked in a designated and easy to clean area, with hard, non-permeable surfaces, away from other dogs.
- Disinfectants, such as a 1:10 bleach solution (1 part bleach, 9 parts water), should be used to clean areas where infected dogs are housed and where they have urinated.
- Normal laundering of urine-contaminated bedding and towels will inactivate the bacteria.
- Ask owners if their dog has been recently ill or been previously vaccinated against leptospirosis.
- Notify public health if staff that have been caring for infected dogs develop signs of illness.



For more information visit [www.cdc.gov/leptospirosis](http://www.cdc.gov/leptospirosis)  
To report canine cases, please contact the Arizona Department of Agriculture at 602-542-4293. To report human illness please contact your local health agency

