

LEPTOSPIROSIS & WEILS DISEASE

Leptospirosis is an infectious condition that can cause a range of different symptoms such as mild flu-like symptoms or, in severe cases, result in multiple organ failure and internal bleeding. Following these serious symptoms, Leptospirosis can sometimes result in death.

Leptospirosis is a zoonotic condition, which means that it can be spread from animals to humans.

Leptospire bacteria are found in many animals but mainly found in:

- mice and rats,
- pigs,
- cattle,
- horses,
- dogs,
- sheep,
- bats, and
- raccoons.

If an infected animal passes urine into a source of water, the leptospire bacteria are capable of surviving in the water for up to several weeks.

Humans can contract the Leptospirosis infection by swallowing contaminated water or by contaminated water coming into contact with the eyes, mouth, nose or any unhealed cuts in the skin.

Less commonly, the infection can be passed on to humans who come into close physical contact with the blood of an animal infected with Leptospirosis.

Rats, pigs and dogs can become infected by bacteria called Leptospirosis. They can then contaminate a water source by urinating into it.

If a human then comes into close contact with the infected water, such as through the eyes mouth, nose or any cuts in their skin, they can become infected with Leptospirosis.

How common is Leptospirosis?

Leptospirosis is a global condition that is found across the world. Rates of Leptospirosis are highest in tropical and sub-tropical locations, particularly in rural areas. However, the condition is becoming increasingly widespread in urban areas that have poor sanitation.

It is estimated that globally 10 million people will catch Leptospirosis every year. It is hard to estimate how many people die from Leptospirosis because many cases occur in parts of the developing world where causes of death are not routinely reported.

However, some experts have estimated that the fatality rate from Leptospirosis could range from five to 25%. Deaths from Leptospirosis are higher in countries where access to good quality healthcare is limited.

In England and Wales, Leptospirosis is very rare, with an average of 40 cases being reported each year. Since 1996, there have been three deaths from Leptospirosis.

Prognosis

The symptoms of Leptospirosis can vary widely from person to person. Some people with the condition can have no symptoms at all, although most will experience symptoms that are similar to influenza (flu).

An estimated five to 10% of people will experience the most serious form of Leptospirosis, which is also known as Weil's disease. Weil's disease can cause:

- kidney failure,
- jaundice,
- shock,
- internal bleeding, and
- inflammation of the heart.

Leptospirosis can be treated using antibiotics. Hospital admission is usually required for the most serious form of Leptospirosis because the body's functions will need to be supported until the infection has passed.

Prevention – at work.

Keep cuts & scratches covered up.

Adopt high hygiene standards by washing hands thoroughly prior to eating, drinking, smoking.

Wear PPE for the works.

Likelihood

With good adherence to prevention measures the likelihood will be minimal.

A couple of Operatives have stated as to having received treatment with Anti Biotics as a result of being diagnosed with Weils Disease.

Olympic rowing champion Andy Holmes killed by Weil's disease



Double Olympic champion rower Andy Holmes has been killed by a rare waterborne infection.

The dad-of-five, 51, died of Weil's disease, which is caught from river water contaminated by the urine of infected animals. With Sir Steve Redgrave, Andy was in the coxed four that won gold at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. They struck gold together again in the coxless pairs at Seoul four years later.

Sir Steve said yesterday: "It's a very sad day. Andy was a fantastic athlete and a brilliant guy. British success in rowing has come from the 1980s. Andy was at the forefront."