

LEPTOSPIROSIS FACT SHEET

LAST UPDATED: NOVEMBER 2025

WHAT IS LEPTOSPIROSIS?

Leptospirosis is an infectious disease caused by bacteria. It is spread directly or indirectly from animals to humans. The bacteria grow well in warm, moist environments. The chance of getting sick is higher in tropical climates and after heavy rainfall, flooding, or hurricanes.

HOW IT SPREADS

Leptospira bacteria are shed in the urine of infected animals and can also be present in other bodily fluids. Contaminated urine can enter water or soil and survive for months. Humans become infected through contact with urine contaminated soil or fresh water, such as streams, rivers, ponds, or floodwater, by ingesting contaminated food or water, or when the bacteria enter through cuts and abrasions in the skin or through the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose, or mouth.

ANIMALS THAT CAN SPREAD LEPTOSPIROSIS

- Rodents (rats)
- Dogs
- Cows
- Pigs
- Horses
- Goats
- Sheep



WHO IS AT HIGHER RISK

People who spend a lot of time around animals or in wet, muddy places have a higher chance of getting sick. This includes farmers, garbage workers, vets and pet caretakers, soldiers, and people who garden or do landscaping. You can start feeling sick a few days to about a month after being exposed.

SYMPTOMS

Some people have no symptoms, others may have:

Mild, flu like symptoms:

- Fever and chills
- Severe headache
- Muscle aches
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, and abdominal pain
- Cough

Severe Signs:

- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes)
- Red eyes
- Skin rash
- Without prompt treatment, severe illness can lead to kidney and liver failure, meningitis, difficulty breathing, or bleeding.

EPIDEMIOLOGY AND SURVEILLANCE UNIT

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For additional info visit www.gov.bm/public-health-fact-sheets



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA
Ministry of Health

PREVENTION

Rodent and animal control

Keep food and trash in closed containers so rats can't get to them. Use traps to catch rats and block holes in your home. Fill rat burrows so they can't come back. Make sure your pets get their shots. Ask your vet about the leptospirosis vaccine for dogs. Don't touch animal pee and always wash your hands after handling animals.

Water and environment safety

Stay away from rivers, ponds, marshes, and floodwater that might be dirty. Don't swim, wade, or drink water from these places. Drink only clean water. If you're not sure the water is safe, boil it or use a water treatment product.

Personal protection

Wash cuts right away and cover them with waterproof bandages. Wear gloves, boots, and waterproof clothes when working in wet areas. If water might splash, wear eye protection or a face mask. Don't walk barefoot outside near water or mud.

TREATMENT

Leptospirosis can be treated, if found early using prescribed antibiotics. Antibiotics should be started as soon as the doctor suspects you have the sickness. Treatment is usually by mouth, while intravenous (IV) antibiotics are used for very sick cases. Severe cases may require hospitalisation and extra care, like kidney treatment.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE LEPTOSPIROSIS

- See a doctor immediately if you have symptoms.
- Tell your clinician doctor about any recent exposure to run-off fresh water, or animals.
- Stay informed

For detailed guidance and downloadable resources, visit:

- www.gov.bm/health-information

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