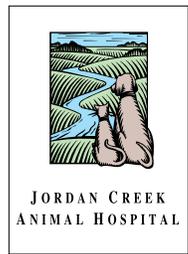




SPRING 2017 Gazette

☞ newsletter for people and their pets



3401 E.P. True Parkway
West Des Moines, Iowa 50265

in this issue:



Leptospirosis: Updates and Current Outbreaks

Recent outbreaks of leptospirosis are occurring around the country. In the Phoenix area, Maricopa County reported over 50 cases of leptospirosis diagnosed in the last year. The Chicago area is also showing concern over recent cases around Lake Michigan. There were even 3 human cases reported in New York City due to exposure to rat urine.

What is leptospirosis?

Leptospirosis is a disease caused by infection with one of the more than 250 serotypes (strains) of bacteria called *Leptospira*. Although there are 250 serotypes worldwide, there are 8 serotypes that commonly infect dogs in Iowa. These bacteria can infect any mammal, including humans. *Leptospira* live in warm, wet environments like damp grass, standing water, mud, and ponds or lakes. Under ideal conditions, the bacteria can survive more than three months in the environment. When not detected and treated promptly with antibiotics and supportive care, dogs may go into kidney and/or liver failure.

How is leptospirosis transmitted?

Leptospirosis is most often transmitted to dogs through contact with the urine of infected animals, either directly or from contaminated environments. Dogs can be exposed through the mucous membranes of the mouth, nose, and eyes, or through cuts in the skin. Raccoons, skunks, opossums, rats, cows, pigs, and deer are all known carriers of the infection. Dogs can also become infected from close contact with another infected dog, which puts those dogs that frequent dog parks at increased risk.

Because of the broad range of carrier species, any dog – even one briefly outdoors in an urban backyard – is vulnerable to the disease.

What are the clinical signs?

Leptospirosis can cause a broad range of clinical signs in any combination. The most common early indicators of *Leptospira* infection are flu-like symptoms including:

- Loss of appetite
- Increase or decrease in urine production
- Uncharacteristic inactivity/lethargy
- Vomiting – sometimes shows up as pancreatitis
- Diarrhea
- Dehydration
- Weakness
- Fever
- Depression

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Leptospirosis

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