

## Leptospirosis

### Definition:

Leptospirosis is a disease in humans and animals caused by *Leptospira* bacteria. These bacteria are found in a wide range of wild and domestic animals worldwide.

### Signs and symptoms:

Symptoms of leptospirosis may include fever, headache, chills, muscle aches, vomiting, and diarrhea. Yellowing of the skin and eyes, red eyes, belly pain, or a rash could be present. Some infected persons may have no symptoms at all. Symptoms usually begin 1-2 weeks after exposure to the bacteria.

### Transmission:

Person to person transmission is rare.

People get leptospirosis by:

- Drinking water that has been contaminated by the urine or body fluids of infected animals, or
- Direct non-intact skin contact with contaminated water, soil, or urine of infected animals.

### Diagnosis:

Leptospirosis is diagnosed through lab tests on blood or urine.

### Role of the School Nurse:

#### Prevention

- The key to preventing leptospirosis is avoiding contact with environments potentially contaminated with animal urine
- Outdoor sports participants should cover cuts or abrasions of the skin
- Protective clothing and footwear should be worn in swampy, flooded, and muddy areas
- Wear gloves for handling animal cages or urine
- Promote strict hand hygiene

#### Treatment Recommendations

- Leptospirosis requires antibiotic treatment, usually doxycycline or penicillin, prescribed by the primary care provider

#### Exclusions

- There is no need to exclude students from school for leptospirosis
- Education modifications may be warranted in children with a positive diagnosis

### Reporting Requirements

- Leptospirosis is a reportable disease. Call Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821 or fax report to 1-800-293-7534

### Resources:

- Maine CDC Leptospirosis website, including fact sheet (<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/zoonotic/leptospirosis.shtml>)
- Federal CDC Leptospirosis website <http://www.cdc.gov/leptospirosis/>