# Animal Shelter Leptospirosis Basics

## What is it?

- Leptospirosis (lepto) is a bacterial disease that affects animals and humans. It can cause liver and kidney failure in animals.
- The disease is carried by wildlife, such as raccoons, skunks, and rats.
- While any mammal can get lepto, it is most commonly seen in dogs.
- Lepto is primarily spread to and from animals and people by contact with urine and urine-contaminated water.
- While cases are seen throughout the year, they are highest in the spring and fall due to heavy rainfall.

## How do I prevent it?

| 1. Minimize | 2. Recognize | 3. Report |
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| **Keep outdoor exercise areas clean, avoid attracting rats and other wildlife with any food or clutter outside the shelter.** | **Signs of lepto vary and are easily confused with other diseases. Diagnosis is made through blood and urine tests.** | **Lepto is required to be reported to the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) at 800-292-3939.** |
| **Do not let dogs drink from or have contact with wet areas.** | **Common symptoms, if any, can include tiredness, weakness, poor appetite, fever, vomiting, thirst, increased urination, and yellowing of their skin or eyes.** | **This information is gathered for the sole purpose of tracking trends in the disease and creating awareness.** |
| **There is a vaccination for lepto, which is required to import dogs 12 weeks and older into a shelter.** | **Puppies and young dogs tend to be more affected.** | |
| **Wear gloves while cleaning and disinfecting. An animal may have lepto and show no signs.** | | |

## You have it, now what?

- Separate sick animals from healthy ones. Make sure sick dogs have their own bowls, bedding, blankets or toys.
- Avoid contact with infected animals' urine. Wear gloves when handling soiled bedding and toys. Clean and disenfect any indoor areas where animals urinate. Wash hands often.
- Restrict sick animals from urinating on outside areas that are accessed by other animals and people.
- Monitor and test any dogs that were near the sick dog(s).
- Care for healthy dogs first to avoid spreading disease.
- Lepto is generally treated with antibiotics and supportive care. Treating animals early increases chances for recovery.
- Work with your veterinarian on treatment and care.

Michigan Department of AGRICULTURE & Rural Development