



Healthy Pets, Healthy 'Ohana

A message from the Hawaiian Humane Society and the Hawai'i State Department of Health



KEEPING YOUR PETS SAFE FROM LEPTOSPIROSIS

What is leptospirosis?

Leptospirosis is a serious, zoonotic bacterial disease that can affect animals and people. It is carried in the urine of infected animals including rats, mice, mongooses, livestock and dogs. Hawai'i has the highest cases nationally due to the warm, wet climate. Flood disasters can dramatically increase exposure risk by spreading contaminated soil and water across a broad area.

What symptoms should I watch for?

Symptoms typically appear 7 to 14 days after exposure, though onset can range from 2 to 20 days. Watch for any of the following in your pet:

- Fever
- Decreased appetite or lethargy
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Increased thirst and urination
- Muscle soreness or reluctance to move
- Yellowing of the skin or whites of the eyes

Yellowing of the skin or eyes can indicate that the disease has begun to affect the liver or kidneys, which is a sign that the illness has progressed to a serious stage. Left untreated, leptospirosis can lead to kidney failure, liver damage and can be fatal in severe cases.

The good news is that leptospirosis is treatable with antibiotics, and early intervention can save your pet's life.

How can my pet be infected?

- Walking through, drinking from, or swimming in contaminated floodwaters, puddles or streams
- Contact with wet soil or mud contaminated with infected animal urine
- Direct contact with the urine, blood or tissues of an infected animal

The bacteria enter the body through broken skin or through the soft tissues of the mouth, nose or eyes. Dogs are considered especially vulnerable because of the time they spend on the ground and their tendency to drink from standing water, but any animal exposed to infected water or mud should be monitored.

What should I do?

If your pet shows any symptoms after exposure, **do not wait:**

- Contact your veterinarian right away
- Tell your veterinarian that your pet was exposed to infected water or mud, and ask them to test for leptospirosis
- Antibiotic treatment is available and is most effective when started early

If you have a dog, speak with your veterinarian about the leptospirosis vaccine.

If your pet is diagnosed, contact your own healthcare provider if you develop symptoms including fever, headache, muscle pain or vomiting.

More info:

[HawaiianHumane.org/leptospirosis](https://hawaiianhumane.org/leptospirosis)



SCAN TO LEARN MORE

Mō'ili'ili Campus
2700 Wai'ālae Avenue
Honolulu, HI 96826

Kosasa Family Campus at Ho'opili
91-1945 Fort Weaver Road,
'Ewa Beach, HI 96826

General
808-356-2200
Animal Emergencies
808-356-2250
info@hawaiianhumane.org