

# Canine Leptospirosis

## **What is Leptospirosis?**

Leptospirosis is a bacterial infection in dogs that most commonly causes acute kidney failure and can affect the liver. Although Leptospirosis has remained quite rare in our area (San Fernando Valley), there has been a reported increase in cases lately. Typical signs include fever, bruising, bleeding, muscle pain, and a painful abdomen. Signs can become severe and if left untreated can lead to death, especially in younger dogs. Leptospirosis is zoonotic as well, meaning the bacteria can be transmitted to humans if they come in contact with a contaminated dog. Similar symptoms will present in humans as in dogs.

## **How can my dog catch Leptospirosis?**

Leptospirosis tends to live in areas where there is still water (for example after rain or sprinklers), contaminating the soil for months even if the water has already dried. It is transmitted into the water through urine, most commonly by wildlife. Leptospirosis has been on the rise and we recommend taking precautions for the time being.

## **How can I protect my dog?**

Fortunately, a Leptospirosis vaccine exists and is begun with a 2-vaccine series. The first dose will be given, and 3-4 weeks later a booster will be given. If your dog has been seen by a veterinarian for a physical exam recently, your dog can receive the vaccine (up to 6 months since that last exam).

## **Who should get vaccinated?**

Any dogs that participate in outdoor activities such as going on walks, hikes, visiting dog parks, dog boarding, grooming facilities, etc. If in doubt, speak with your veterinarian to determine if the Leptospirosis vaccine is recommended for your dog.