

Dr. Oakley says...

Let's talk lepto; Leptospirosis, that is. This sneaky bacterial disease can sicken both you and your dog! There are many ways to become infected with leptospirosis: 1. Biting contaminated wildlife such as opossums, deer, raccoons or rats 2. Contacting urine from contaminated animals in the woods, ponds, backyards, even in the house 3. Licking our muddy (and exposed) paws after walking in contaminated areas 4. Drinking or swimming in contaminated lakes, rivers or puddles....This all sounds like a regular day in Lebanon!

These bacteria can survive in water or wet soil for weeks or months which doesn't say good things about our spring thaw season around here! The spiral-shaped bacteria burrow into skin or pads and spreads through the bloodstream. Once in the bloodstream, it can damage blood vessels, lungs, kidneys or liver.

Unfortunately, it is a challenge to diagnose because many of its symptoms: vomiting, fever, stiff joints, diarrhea can appear like other common ailments. Blood and urine tests can rule out other conditions.

Fortunately, this disease isn't typically as fatal as rabies is, but you and your pet have a higher chance of contracting it than for rabies.

What can you do? First and foremost, try to keep your dog from drinking from puddles or ponds. Bring fresh water on those hikes! Remember to wipe paws when they come inside so they don't track in the bacteria for you or your other dogs to pick up. Keep up on pest control, don't let the mice or rats get out of hand near your barns or homes.

Is my pet vaccinated? Probably yes, but unfortunately it is not always effective. The current vaccine helps but does not provide 100% protection. There are many types of the bacteria and the vaccine doesn't protect against all of them.

This isn't a required vaccination, like rabies, but is a good choice. In our area, I can't think of anything I'd rather do than splash in the pond, run through the fields, find where the deer have been and drink from a nice, refreshing puddle.... thank goodness Dr. Z takes care of me! It's all too tempting for me around here!

By the way, please make sure you sign up for our new Pet Portal through our website!
www.lebanonvethospital.com You can access your pet's records, make appointments and manage their care at your convenience!

Peace,

Dr. O