

Transmission

- Water contaminated by urine from an infected rodent or animal enters the eyes, nose, mouth or a skin cut
- Water or food is consumed that is contaminated with urine from an infected rodent or animal

Symptoms

- Can be mild.
- Can include nausea, headaches, stomach or muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhoea or fever.
- In severe cases, may cause jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes), kidney failure, bleeding from the lungs, or meningitis.

Prevention

- Prevent contact with contaminated water, including by wearing appropriate protective clothing or equipment
- Shower or bath after water sports
- Wear protective clothes during contact with animals
- Employ social mobilization and behaviour change communication
- Use safe, well-maintained sources of drinking water (that cannot be contaminated during a flood)

Vulnerable people

- People living in flooded areas (for example, after a cyclone), especially if they have poor rubbish disposal systems
- People who work closely with animals or in sewers (including farmers, veterinarians, slaughterhouse workers, river fish workers)

If an epidemic occurs

- Detect people sick with leptospirosis and refer them to health facilities
- Increase social mobilization and behaviour change communication
- Encourage people to avoid contact with contaminated water, avoid swimming or fishing, and wear appropriate personal protective equipment
- Treat drinking water sources that may be contaminated, especially during and after floods

Community-based assessment - questions

Make a map of the community and mark the information you gather on the map. Record other details.

- When did people start to fall sick with leptospirosis?

- How many people have fallen sick with leptospirosis? Where?
- How many people have died? Where?
- How many people live in the affected community or area? How many children under five years of age live in the area?
- Who and where are the vulnerable people?
- Is the community (or are some parts of it) flooded?
- Might some lakes, ponds, canals etc. in the community be contaminated?
- Where do people obtain their drinking water? Has it been contaminated by flood water?
- Where are the local health facilities and services? (Include traditional and community carers from whom people seek advice.)
- What are the community's habits, practices and beliefs about caring for and feeding sick people?
- Is a social mobilization or health promotion programme in place?
- Which sources of information do people use most?
- Are rumours or is misinformation about leptospirosis spreading in the community?

Volunteer actions

See the following action tools for more information on what actions to take against leptospirosis:

- 1 - Community-based surveillance
- 2 - Community mapping
- 3 - Communicating with the community
- 4 - Referral to health facilities
- 5 - Volunteer protection and safety
- 19 - Psychosocial support (Psychological first aid (PFA))
- 29 - Hygiene promotion
- 30 - Clean, safe household water
- 31 - Good food hygiene
- 32 - Sanitation
- 34 - Handwashing with soap
- 36 - Vector control
- 38 - Waste disposal and clean-up campaigns
- 43 - Social mobilization and behaviour change