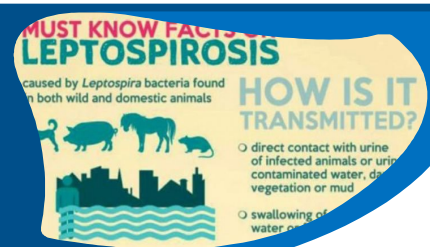


Toolbox Talk Leptospirosis



What?

There are two types of leptospirosis that can affect people at work:-

- Weil's disease; is a serious and sometimes fatal infection transmitted by contact with urine from infected rats (inhaling dust from droppings also carries risk of infection)
- Hardjo; form of Leptospirosis; is transmitted from cattle to humans

Why?

- There are around 50 cases of Leptospirosis each year in the UK
- Weil's disease is spread via direct or indirect contact with rat urine, often via contaminated water
- Infected cattle spread the disease via bacteria in their urine
- Both diseases start with a flu-like illness with a persistent and severe headache
- Anyone who is exposed to rat urine or foetal fluids from cattle is at risk
- Those most at risk include sewage workers or those in contact with canal and river water
- Hygiene is essential and extra care must be taken with skin injuries
- Leptospirosis is less severe if treated promptly so if you experience any symptoms while working in areas where there might be rats, stagnant or contaminated water make sure you inform your Doctor if you experience symptoms

Do



- Wear correct PPE
- Report any suspect areas where rats have been seen
- Cover open wounds e.g. cuts etc.
- Wash hands with anti-bacterial agent
- See a GP if you might have been exposed to infected pee and you have:
 - A very high temperature, or feel hot and shivery
 - A headache
 - Feeling and being sick
 - Aching muscles and joints
 - Red eyes
 - Loss of appetite
- Ask for an urgent appointment if you have:
 - Yellow skin and eyes (jaundice)
 - Swollen ankles, feet or hands
 - Chest pain
 - Shortness of breath
 - Coughing up blood

You might have a serious infection that needs to be treated quickly

Don't



- Work without the correct PPE
- Ignore symptoms (flu like illness with a severe and persistent headache)
- Eat or smoke in contaminated areas
- Touch dead animals with your bare hands