



PVPC NEWSLETTER

Summer 2026 Issue



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Leptospirosis

Leptospirosis is a zoonotic disease caused by the bacterium *Leptospira*. Being that it is a zoonotic disease, leptospirosis can be transmitted to humans from animals including domesticated pets who have been exposed to the bacteria. The *Leptospira* bacteria are shed through the urine of infected animals and will survive in water or soil for several weeks or even months. Humans and animals that are affected by the bacteria will develop severe health conditions that can pose the risk of death if left untreated.

There are a few exposures that pose a risk to both people and pets for contracting leptospirosis. Since leptospirosis is shed through the urine of infected animals, having contact with water or soil containing the urine will place people and other animals at direct risk of becoming infected with the bacteria. The risk becomes especially high after hurricanes or flooding, and even heavy rainfall. Of course, drinking water or consuming food that has been contaminated with urine of an infected animal will also pose a high risk for infection.

A person who has contracted leptospirosis will become sick within 2 to 30 days of having contact with the bacteria. Some people will

show no symptoms, but most commonly symptoms appear in two phases. In the first phase, fevers and chills, muscle and body aches, and signs of gastroenteritis such as vomiting and diarrhea will be seen. It's not uncommon for an infected person to feel better for a short period of time prior to the second phase then become ill again. In the second phase, an infected person will suffer with kidney and/or liver failure or meningitis. Dogs will display very similar symptoms as humans and will often display them in the same two phases. Cats; however, often don't show clinical signs, but will be carriers of the bacteria. As previously stated, if left untreated, a person or dog infected with the *Leptospira* bacteria can become very ill and is highly at risk for death. If any of the above symptoms are noted in a person or a pet then it is pertinent to seek medical care. Oftentimes, a severe leptospirosis infection is treated with antibiotics and intravenous fluid therapy while being monitored in the hospital. This treatment protocol and monitoring is necessary to rid the body of infection and correct the major organs before they fail.

As many know, El Dorado County is highly populated with many species of wildlife such as skunks, raccoons, coyotes, mountain lions, and more. Since EDC is also the perfect place to enjoy hiking and outdoor water activities such as kayaking and fishing, it can be considered a high risk location for being exposed to leptospirosis. Some ways to prevent humans from becoming infected by leptospirosis is to refrain from swimming in water that could potentially be contaminated with animal urine especially after heavy rainfall or flooding. Additionally, it's best to avoid contact with animals that may be infected with bacteria. If direct contact with a potentially infected animal is unavoidable then extra precautions should be taken to cover cuts or scratches with waterproof bandages and wearing protective wear such as gloves and/or waterproof clothing.

El Dorado County poses as a high exposure risk to

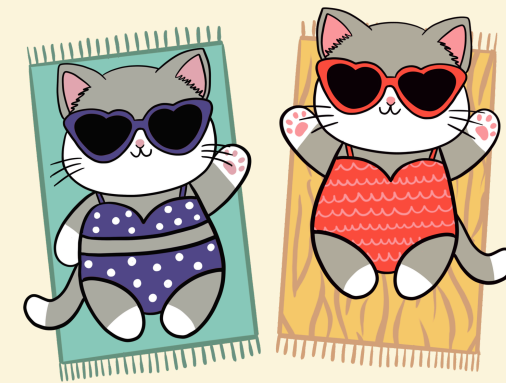
leptospirosis for humans; however, being that it is a zoonotic disease all domesticated pets are also at a high risk for exposure. It's not uncommon for dogs to drink out of puddles in the backyard after heavy rainfall and water bowls outside that wildlife have access to or larger bodies of water such as ponds and lakes. Cats are notorious for catching and killing rodents both inside and outside, and can also drink from areas of standing water. All of these scenarios put both dogs and cats at an even higher risk to contracting leptospirosis than most humans so it's even more important to take the extra measures to prevent them from being exposed to contracting the bacteria. For dogs, the most effective prevention to contracting leptospirosis is to vaccinate them with the lepto vaccine. After a dog has completed the initial lepto vaccine series, it's important to booster the vaccine annually as long as a veterinarian deems the pet healthy to have the vaccine updated. In addition to the vaccine, dog owners should discourage drinking or playing in standing water such as puddles, ponds, and lakes as well as limiting contact with wildlife including rodents. Leptospirosis in cats is very rare; however, it's not impossible for them to contract the disease. The biggest concern with cats is them becoming carriers for the bacteria shed through urine. Unfortunately, there is not a vaccine that can be given to cats so preventing them from being exposed to leptospirosis is a bit more tricky than with dogs. The best way to protect cats is implementing some pest control to limit their interactions with rats and/or mice who tend to be primary carriers of the *Leptospira* bacteria. In addition, cats should also be discouraged when possible from drinking out of standing water. Unfortunately, EDC is an area with many cats who live outdoors and it is near impossible for outdoor cat owners to limit their exposure to risks such as leptospirosis. The next best thing that can be done is to be cautious when interacting with cats who have possible exposure as well as limiting interactions between cats and dogs to reduce the potential spread of the bacteria.

Meet Audrey

Meet our newest staff member!!



Audrey came to us at the beginning of 2026 as an ROP student through the local Animal Health program for high school students. She made such an impression on our hospital that we needed to make her a part of the PVPC team. Audrey was raised in Washington state, but has lived here in EDC for the past seven years. She is currently only 18 years old and just recently graduated from Ponderosa High School this year. Audrey's interest in animals began when she was a child as she wanted to grow up to play with all animals every day. Now that she is older, her love for animals has transitioned to an



We Will be Closed...

As a way to thank our doctors and staff for their hard work and to allow them extra time with family, our office will be closed for TWO holidays this summer!

- Saturday July 4th
- Monday September 7th (Labor Day)

Aside from these two days we are open Monday through Friday from 8am to 5:30pm and all other Saturdays from 8am to 5pm.

interest in veterinary medicine. With her interest in pursuing a career in veterinary medicine, Audrey hopes to gain a deeper understanding of animals and help them as much as possible. She hopes to continue gaining work experience in the veterinary field and plans to enroll in an RVT program to graduate as a licensed technician. Although Audrey is young, her experience with animals began before her ROP internship here. Outside of work and school, she spends a great deal of time raising livestock for our local El Dorado County fair and local jackpots. Welcome to the PVPC family, Audrey! We look forward to watching you grow as you continue learning the ropes of this rewarding career!

Noodle's Notes



Welcome to summer, all!

Since it's nice and warm out I want to remind you all about the dangers of heat exhaustion in my flat faced dog friends this time of year. All breeds of dogs and even us felines are at risk of heat exhaustion if left outside with no shade or enough water for too long. However, the brachycephalic (smushed faced) breeds are the most susceptible to facing an emergency due to heat exhaustion.

French bulldogs, pugs, and bulldogs are all dog breeds with flat faces and suffer from Brachycephalic Airway Syndrome (BAS). Their extremely shortened airways restricts airflow preventing them from being able to efficiently pant and cool themselves. Mild to extreme heat or even slight overexertion can send a flat-faced dog into respiratory distress and overheating.

The symptoms of heat exhaustion in any pet, especially in brachycephalic breeds, are heavy and labored breathing, bright red, purple, or pale gums, weakness or stumbling, and excessive drooling. In the event of this type of emergency, move the dog out of the sun and into a cooler environment then try to cool them down with cool water. When doing this step, it's very important not to submerge the dog into ice cold water or apply ice cold water to the

body. Although the goal is to cool the dog down, ice cold water can cause the dog to go into shock. Lastly, seek immediate medical care to have the dog evaluated by a veterinarian.

This summer heat can make it difficult to prevent short-faced breeds from overheating, but there are a few steps pet owners can take. Firstly, it's important to save long walks for the early morning or in the evening to avoid the midday heat wave. Secondly, play time or strenuous activity should be limited during most hours of the day this time of year. Next, there should be some cooling accessories readily available if being outside in the heat is completely unavoidable. These accessories can include special cooling vests made for dogs or even a towel available to dampen with cool water and lay on the ground. Lastly, all dogs, especially flat-faced dogs, should not be left in the heat unattended. All in all, we just ask that you do your best to keep those smushed faces inside and out of the heat as much as possible so they don't become hot dawgs!

Anyhow, stay safe out there and keep cool this summer!



Summer Awareness

- June
 - National Preparedness Month
- July
 - National Pet Hydration Awareness Month
- August
 - National Immunization Month
 - Itchy Pet Awareness Month
- September
 - Animal Pain Awareness Month
 - National Pet Insurance Month