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# LEPTOSPIROSIS

## WHAT IS LEPTOSPIROSIS?

Leptospirosis is a bacterial infection present in temperate and tropical regions of the world where it is more prevalent following flooding.

The bacteria are spread from the urine of infected rodents to humans through contact with the skin (particularly broken skin) and mucous membranes. There have also been cases of transmission through direct contact and consumption of contaminated foodstuff.

The incubation period of leptospirosis ranges from 2 to 26 days and some infections can be asymptomatic. The first signs and symptoms include rapid onset of fever, headache, muscle pains, a skin rash and redness of the conjunctiva (white part of the eye). Meningitis can also be a complication.

Around five to 10 per cent of sufferers will develop Weil's disease, a severe complication which can produce jaundice, renal failure, haemorrhage and devastating heart and lung collapse. Mortality rates can be from five to 15 per cent.

While the risk for most travellers is low, it is advisable to avoid wading or swimming in endemic areas and wear protective clothing if contact with contaminated soil or waters is likely.

Prophylactic medication may be prescribed for those travellers at increased risk of infection i.e. aid workers, adventure tourists, or with an occupational hazard.

**More information on Leptospirosis is available during your pre-travel consultation with Travelvax.  
Call 1300 360 164 for the location of the clinic nearest to you.**