Leptospirosis

Definition:
Leptospirosis is a disease in humans and animals caused by *Leptospira* bacteria. These bacteria are found in a wide range of wild and domestic animals worldwide.

Signs and symptoms:
Symptoms of leptospirosis may include fever, headache, chills, muscle aches, vomiting, and diarrhea. Yellowing of the skin and eyes, red eyes, belly pain, or a rash could be present. Some infected persons may have no symptoms at all. Symptoms usually begin 1-2 weeks after exposure to the bacteria.

Transmission:
Person to person transmission is rare. People get leptospirosis by:
- Drinking water that has been contaminated by the urine or body fluids of infected animals, or
- Direct non-intact skin contact with contaminated water, soil, or urine of infected animals.

Diagnosis:
Leptospirosis is diagnosed through lab tests on blood or urine.

Role of the School Nurse:
Prevention
- The key to preventing leptospirosis is avoiding contact with environments potentially contaminated with animal urine
- Outdoor sports participants should cover cuts or abrasions of the skin
- Protective clothing and footwear should be worn in swampy, flooded, and muddy areas
- Wear gloves for handling animal cages or urine
- Promote strict hand hygiene

Treatment Recommendations
- Leptospirosis requires antibiotic treatment, usually doxycycline or penicillin, prescribed by the primary care provider

Exclusions
- There is no need to exclude students from school for leptospirosis
- Education modifications may be warranted in children with a positive diagnosis

Reporting Requirements
- Leptospirosis is a reportable disease. Call Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821 or fax report to 1-800-287-6865

Resources:

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