How can we prevent Leptospirosis?

Leptospirosis can be prevented by taking the following preventive measures:

• Consume boiled water, especially during the rainy season.
• Those with cuts or open wounds should avoid muddy riverbanks and ditches where there is regular passage of wild or domestic animals.
• Wear protective clothing (gloves, boots, long pants, and long-sleeved shirts) when working with wet soil or plants.

Early treatment is very important.

What is the treatment?

Leptospirosis is cured if diagnosed at the right time and treated immediately by a doctor.

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Where and how does it occur?

Leptospirosis is most common in tropical and subtropical areas with high rainfall. The disease is mainly found wherever humans come into contact with contaminated mud or water.

The leptospirosis bacteria enter the human body through cuts and cracks in the skin, e.g. through bare hands or feet, or through the membranes of the eyes, nose and mouth.

What is Leptospirosis?

Leptospirosis is an infectious disease caused by bacteria that are transmitted through mud or water contaminated by the urine of infected animals.

Rats, other rodents and domestic animals transmit the infection.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms are

• Fever
• Headache
• Muscle pain
• Back pain
• Conjunctivitis (bloodshot eyes with discharge)
• Sometimes jaundice (yellow colour of the eyes, mouth and skin)

In certain areas, cases of leptospirosis may peak during the rainy season, and the disease may spread when floods occur.

If you show symptoms of leptospirosis, consult a doctor immediately.

In severe cases there can be permanent complications, such as kidney or other organ failure.

Early detection is vital as delay could lead to serious illness and even death.

Leptospirosis is often confused with dengue fever, malaria and flu. Correct laboratory diagnosis of leptospirosis is a must.

Who is at risk?

Outdoor and agricultural workers are particularly at risk.

The other main occupational groups at risk include pet shop workers, veterinarians, sewer workers, miners, cane harvesters, and abattoir workers.

It is also a recreational hazard to those who swim or wade in stagnant waters.