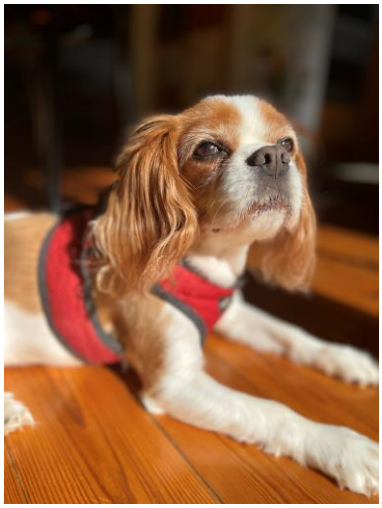
Leptospirosis

Attention all dog owners!

Unfortunately, there have been three more confirmed cases of Leptospirosis in August. Some of you may remember that in 2019 Leptospirosis shook our dog community in Sydney with at least 9 dogs dying of the disease, in just a few months. All of these dogs were not vaccinated. These dogs lived in Surry Hills, Darlinghurst, Glebe and Redfern.



What we know

One of the most recent cases was a dog that lives in Balmain and had been in contact with rats. This dog was not vaccinated against leptospirosis but is thankfully recovering from the disease. This is the first case of the disease seen in Balmain. The second dog was from Newtown and unfortunately was not able to be saved. The third dog was from Crows Nest and the outcome is still uncertain.

What is Leptospirosis?

Leptospirosis is a potentially fatal bacterial infection that can lead to acute kidney failure and liver disease in dogs. Dogs become infected when they come in to contact with infected urine from rats or indirectly from contaminated water or soil. They can also become infected by hunting and eating rats.

Importantly, Leptospirosis is a zoonotic disease. This means that humans can become infected as well, for example through contact with rat urine or urine of infected dogs, through skin wounds or mucous membranes.

What you can do to protect your dog

Prevention can be achieved by limiting contact to sources of infection, such as rats and stagnant water, and through vaccination.

So far, no vaccinated dogs have become clinically unwell. **So, we recommend vaccinating all at risk dogs.**

The current recommendation from the University of Sydney Teaching Hospital is to:

"Please vaccinate your dog if you live within 5km radius of Surry Hills, Crows Nest, Balmain or its surrounding suburbs, or if your dog is in contact with rats."

Based on the fact that one of the recent cases was from a completely novel (new) area we would even recommend vaccinating dogs that live outside the 'zone' we previously described.

We would like to further emphasise that dogs that hunt rats and drink stagnant water, or swim in it, are more at risk.

A vaccine has to be given twice 2-4 weeks apart and yearly thereafter to ensure protection.

Dr Polina

389 New South Head Road Double Bay NSW 2028 • **p** 9326 1255 • **w** vethq.com.au • **e** reception@vethq.com.au