Leptospirosis Risk in Outdoor Activities

Leptospirosis is a disease caused by Leptospira bacterial species. These bacteria are carried in the urine of infected animals. Leptospirosis exists worldwide, but it is more likely to be found in tropical climates.

How People Get It
If a person comes into contact with fresh water or soil which was contaminated with bacteria which causes leptospirosis, he/she could be at risk for developing the disease. The bacteria can enter the body through the eyes, nose, mouth, skin cuts, or and abrasions.

Symptoms
Symptoms may appear anywhere from two days to four weeks after exposure to the bacteria. When symptoms occur, they can include the following.

- Fever
- Headache
- Chills
- Muscle and/or joint pain
- General weakness
- Eye redness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Abdominal pain
- Cough

Reduce Your Risk

- Wear shoes in potentially contaminated standing water or mud
- Cover cuts and scrapes with watertight bandages
- Try to avoid going under water or swallowing water
- Wash your hands and face with soap and water after contact

Be sure to see a doctor as soon as possible if you have recently been in fresh water, wet soil, or mud which may be contaminated by bacteria. The doctor can provide testing for leptospirosis and treatment if needed.