

Firehouse has been closely monitoring the story aired on CBS - Channel 4 in Denver on Thursday, 2/7/08, about an outbreak of a bacterial disease called Leptospirosis. Although the story was very scary, we do not believe that it was accurate.

A few important things to keep in mind:

- There is no need for panic. None of the 5 Firehouse Animal Health Centers have had any Leptospirosis cases over the past 6 months. In addition, in a communication from Friday, 2/8/08, Dr. Barb Powers at the CSU Veterinary Diagnostic Lab in Ft Collins told us that CSU has seen no cases of Leptospirosis in dogs in 2008.
- The claim in the story that there have been “thousands” of cases in Denver is inaccurate.
- This bacteria is found throughout the United States, including in the Front Range of Colorado. It exists in raccoon populations and only occasionally is transmitted to dogs.
- The occurrence of cases in dogs is more common in the late summer and early fall.
- Although there is a vaccine available for Leptospirosis, it is only partially effective.
- Because we know that Leptospirosis exists here, we are always on the lookout for cases. Our doctors and staff are well trained in what to look for and how to treat this disease.
- Although Leptospirosis is a serious disease, there are very effective treatments. If diagnosed and treated efficiently, Leptospirosis can usually be cured.
- Although it is possible for a human to get Leptospirosis from an infected dog, the probability of this happening is extremely small.
- Symptoms of Leptospirosis include decreased activity, decreased appetite, painful joints, vomiting and increased thirst/urination. If your dog is showing these symptoms, please call Firehouse.
- If we suspect Leptospirosis, we can run laboratory tests to help us determine if treatment is needed.
- If we find evidence of a problem, our doctors can formulate an effective treatment plan.

Please contact us with any questions you might have – we are here to help!

You can get much more in-depth information from the following resources:

1. www.myfirehouse.com – go to the ‘Pet Resources’ section, click on ‘Pet Research’, and then search for ‘Leptospirosis’
2. www.labbies.com/lepto.htm
3. www.vet.uga.edu/vpp/CLERK/noel/