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Media alert from the Media Scanning & Verification Cell, IDSP-NCDC.

Alert ID	Publication Date	Reporting Date	Place Name	News Source/Publication Language
4849	29.08.2018	30.08.2018	Kerala	www.thenewsminute.com/English https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/increase-leptospirosis-cases-kerala-after-floods-alert-issued-5-districts-87471
Title:	Increase in leptospirosis cases in Kerala after floods, alert issued for 5 districts			
Action By CSU, IDSP -NCDC	Information communicated to SSU-Kerala			

Following the floods in the state of Kerala, health department officials are now reporting an influx in the number of cases of leptospirosis, also known as 'rat fever.' The Directorate of Health Services had on August 28 issued a leptospirosis alert stating, "There is a sudden increase of Leptospirosis from Thrissur, Palakkad, Kozhikode, Malappuram and Kannur districts. All of them had indirect contact with flood water. You may take this situation very seriously and alert the entire clinical team of your district. Any fever with myalgia to be taken as Leptospirosis and to be treated accordingly until further orders."

Speaking to TNM, Dr Jayashree, Kozhikode District Medical Officer (DMO) said, "We normally see a number of people presenting with leptospirosis around the monsoons, but this year following the floods, we expected to see more people coming in with symptoms of it." She said that out of the people who've presented with symptoms, 28 cases of leptospirosis have been confirmed in Kozhikode. The DMO added that there are 64 people who are suspected to be suffering from leptospirosis, whose reports are awaited.

Save Water- Save Life, Save a tree- Don't print unless it's really necessary!

Disclaimer:- This is a media alert subject to verification.

**Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP), National Centre for Disease Control,
Ministry Of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India**

22-Sham Nath Marg, Delhi – 110 054

For more information please contact: Media Scanning & Verification Cell: - Phone (011)23946029

Email: - idspmediaalert@gmail.com, idsp-msc@nic.in, idsp-npo@nic.in

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In 2017 alone, there were 1408 confirmed cases of leptospirosis reported in the state of Kerala, of which there were 80 deaths reported. In 2016, there were 1710 cases confirmed of which 35 succumbed to the infection.

“Leptospirosis or ‘rat fever,’ is a zoonotic infection which is caused by the bacteria leptospira,” explains Dr Keerthi, a Medical Officer from Chennai, adding, “A zoonotic infection is one which is spread to humans through animals. It is transmitted either through direct contact with body fluids, usually the urine, of an infected animal, or through contact with soil or water which has been contaminated with infected urine.”

Infected animals can shed the leptospira through normal bodily secretions, most commonly through urine. If this comes in contact with a water body, it will contaminate the water. Should a person with any small cuts or injury wade into this water, there is a chance of the same being transmitted to them.

Dr Jayashree further clarified that the risk of acquiring leptospirosis can be greatly reduced by avoiding wading into water which may have been contaminated by infected animals. In situations where it is not entirely possible to avoid the water, whether due to the nature of one’s profession or even in calamities such as the recent floods seen in Kerala, protective clothing and shoes are to be worn to reduce the chance of contracting the infection.

“Roughly 9 out of 10 people present with a mild form of the disease, with complaints of fever, headache, nausea, joint pains, fatigue and the likes. In some extremely rare cases, someone might present with a severe form of the illness wherein their kidneys and liver are affected, this is called Weil’s Disease,” adds Dr Keerthi.

When asked why the disease is commonly called as ‘rat fever,’ Dr Keerthi responded, “It has been noted that the fever is commonly spread through the urine of infected rats.”

Leptospirosis is diagnosed by blood and urine tests. Those found to have contracted the infection are treated with doxycycline and supportive measures as deemed necessary.

As the state slowly rebuilds itself, measures have been taken to ensure that people who have come in contact with potentially contaminated water are given preventive medication.

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