

Weil's Disease (Leptospirosis)

What is Weil's Disease? Weil's Disease is a serious form of *Leptospirosis*, a bacterial infection carried in the urine of infected animals—most commonly rats. It can be contracted through contact with contaminated water, soil, or vegetation, especially in areas near rivers, ditches, or stagnant water.

How You Could Be Exposed

You may be at risk if:

- You work near watercourses, ditches, or flood-prone areas.
- You have cuts, abrasions, or broken skin that come into contact with contaminated water or soil.
- You touch vegetation or tools that have been contaminated.
- You do not wash hands before eating, drinking, or smoking.

Symptoms to Watch For

Symptoms usually appear 7–14 days after exposure and may include:

- Flu-like symptoms: fever, chills, headache, muscle aches
- Vomiting or diarrhoea
- Red eyes or sensitivity to light
- Jaundice (yellowing of skin or eyes)
- In severe cases: kidney or liver failure, meningitis

Seek medical attention immediately if you experience symptoms and have recently worked in high-risk areas.

How to Protect Yourself

- **Wear PPE:** gloves, long sleeves, waterproof boots, and eye protection.
- **Cover cuts and abrasions** with waterproof dressings.
- **Wash hands thoroughly** with soap and clean water after work, especially before eating or drinking.
- **Avoid touching your face** during work.
- **Clean tools and equipment** after use.
- **Report rodent sightings** to your supervisor or council contact.

If You Think You've Been Exposed

- Inform your project supervisor immediately.
- Contact your GP and mention possible exposure to *Leptospirosis*.
- Keep a record of where and when you were working.