



Legionella bacteria like to stick together: they colonise and contaminate hot water systems, spa baths and showers, then spread through the air from the water source.

**Protect yourself and patients!
Run showers hot for at least two minutes every day - especially before use.**

**Prevent the spread of Legionnaires' disease
FLUSH YOUR SHOWER**



For more information on infection prevention and control in practice visit www.healthcare2z.org



**Prevent the spread of Legionnaires' disease
FLUSH YOUR SHOWER**

Legionella bacteria are naturally found within the environment and it is very difficult to prevent them entering water systems.

The risk of an outbreak within residential environments can be reduced by taking a few simple precautions. These include the following:

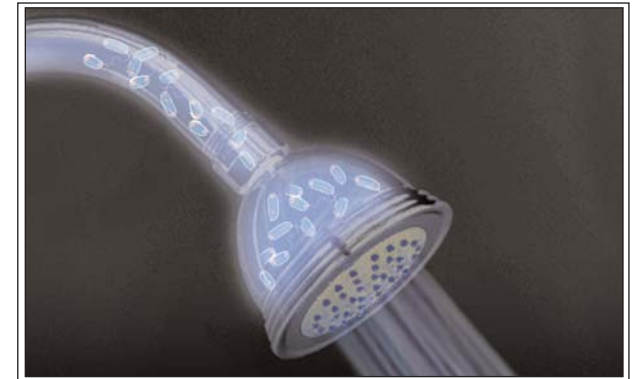
- Do not allow water to stand and stagnate in cisterns or pipes.
- Try to ensure that taps and water outlets are not left unused for long periods of time.
- Ensure that water cisterns are well covered to prevent debris or vermin from entering. Tanks should be cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis.
- Water should ideally be stored at 60°C and circulated at 50°C. Legionella bacteria thrive in temperatures between 20 and 45°C so these should be avoided. Thermostatically controlled taps may need to be fitted to prevent scalding of the very young or old.
- **Before using the shower allow the hot water to run for at least two minutes every day before use.**

Providers of residential accommodation have a legal duty to comply with regulations put in place to help prevent an outbreak of Legionnaires' disease.

This content is not intended nor does it replace individual professional advice. Please contact a healthcare professional or seek advice from NHS Direct (0845 46 47) NHS Direct Wales (0845 46 47) or NHS 24 in Scotland (08454 24 24 24).



**SHOWERING
SHOWERING
INFERNO
INFERNO**



Just when you thought it was safe to return to your shower...



LEGIONNAIRES' DISEASE FACTS

Legionnaires' disease is a form of lung infection caused by the bacteria Legionella. It spreads through the air via contaminated water droplets or aerosols.

Transmission

Legionnaires' disease is a form of lung infection caused by the bacteria Legionella. The bacteria are transmitted through the air within water droplets/aerosols. Common sources of the infection are air conditioning units, cooling towers, swimming pools or spas. The bacteria grow and multiply within the warm moist environments and then spread to cause infection as individuals breathe in contaminated water droplets/aerosols. The bacteria are not transmitted from person-to-person.

Incubation

The incubation period of Legionnaires' disease is between 2 to 10 days.

Illness

The initial symptoms associated with Legionnaires' disease include pyrexia and headache, with muscle aches and pain. The individual may suffer from a pain in the side of the chest with a shortness of breath and a productive cough with thick green mucus, along with general aches and pains.

Other non-respiratory symptoms include diarrhoea, vomiting and on some occasions mental confusion.

The infected individual may suffer from joint pain, weak muscles, fatigue, and have problems with concentration for a few months after the initial symptoms have subsided. They may also continue to suffer from a cough and shortness of breath for some time. Most infected individuals show a complete recovery within one year.

Pontiac fever is caused by the same bacteria as Legionnaires' disease but the symptoms are less severe.

Treatment

The treatment of Legionnaires' disease is usually with antibiotics, and generally requires a stay in hospital. Intensive care treatment may be required if the symptoms are very severe and respiratory assistance is required.

Exclusion

Isolation precautions are not required as the infection is not transmitted from person-to-person.

Notification

Not a notifiable disease.

Complications

Legionnaires' disease can result in serious complications such as kidney or liver damage, or even death. The people most at risk from complications are the elderly, smokers, those with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and the immunocompromised.

Prevention

Legionnaires' disease can be prevented by ensuring all water supplies and air conditioning systems are clean and safe to use. There are regulations in the UK to ensure that this happens. If a case of the disease is discovered, the facility may be closed. Thorough cleaning should be undertaken to prevent any further infections.