

Prevention and Control Measures: Legionella

Transmission:

- Legionella bacteria grow best in warm water found in hot tubs, cooling towers, hot water tanks, plumbing systems, and decorative fountains.
- People get Legionella when they breathe in contaminated mist or vapor, (droplets of water in the air).
- Legionella is not spread person-to-person.
- Most healthy individuals do not become infected with Legionella bacteria after exposure.
- People at higher risk of becoming ill after exposure are older individuals (usually 50 years of age or older, current or former smokers, those with chronic lung diseases, those with weakened immune systems from diseases like cancer, diabetes, or kidney failure, and those who take drugs that suppress the immune system, like chemotherapy.

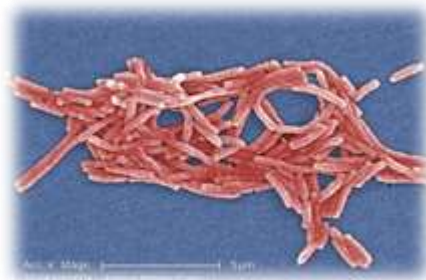
Symptoms:

- Symptoms may include cough, shortness of breath, high fever, muscle aches, and headaches.
- Symptoms begin 2 to 14 days after being exposed to the bacteria.
- Most people with Legionnaires' disease will have pneumonia (lung infection) since the Legionella bacteria grow and thrive in the lungs.
- Pontiac fever is a milder infection that usually last 2-5 days and does not cause pneumonia.

Prevention and Control Measures:

- The key to preventing Legionnaires' disease is facility maintenance of the water systems in which Legionella grows, including drinking water systems, hot tubs, decorative fountains, and cooling towers.
- Ensure water systems are kept at the appropriate water temperatures and chemically treated.
- Healthcare facilities, like hospitals and assisted living facilities should have a Legionella prevention plan that includes testing, and short-term and long-term remediation plans for the plumbing and hydrotherapy systems.
- Public places like hotels, casinos, and splash parks with water features, decorative pools, and hot tubs should have a recreational water treatment plan including regularly scheduled testing, cleaning, and treatment.
- There is no vaccine to prevent Legionella.
- Persons at increased risk of infection may choose to avoid high-risk exposures, like being in or near a hot tub or decorative fountains and breathing in the mist.

For More Information: Visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) and type [Legionella](#) in the SEARCH box.



Alabama Department of Public Health
Infectious Diseases & Outbreaks Division, 201 Monroe St, Montgomery, AL 36104
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