



Notice to Residents of Lower Washington Heights

The Health Department is investigating a cluster of Legionnaires' disease in lower Washington Heights. Twenty-nine people have been diagnosed with Legionnaires' disease since the end of September. The Health Department is investigating these cases and testing the water from all cooling tower systems in this section of Washington Heights. **The risk to most people is low, but if you have flu-like symptoms, please see your medical provider right away.**

Legionnaires' Disease Frequently Asked Questions

What is Legionnaires' disease?

Legionnaires' disease is a type of pneumonia. It is caused by bacteria (*Legionella*) that grow in warm water.

Is the disease contagious?

No. Legionnaires' disease is not spread from person to person. People only get sick by breathing in water vapor containing the bacteria. People who are sick cannot make others sick.

Who is at risk?

Groups at higher risk include people who are age 50 or older — especially cigarette smokers — people with chronic lung disease or weakened immune systems and people who take medicines that weaken their immune systems (immunosuppressive drugs).

What are the symptoms of Legionnaires' disease?

Symptoms are like the flu and can include fever, chills, muscle aches, cough and shortness of breath. Some people may also have headaches, fatigue, loss of appetite, confusion or diarrhea.

What should I do if I think I have Legionnaires' disease?

If you have flu-like symptoms, seek medical attention right away, especially if you have a medical condition that affects your breathing, like emphysema, or if you are a smoker.

What is the treatment for Legionnaires' disease?

The disease is treated with antibiotics. Most people get better with early treatment, although they may need to be hospitalized. Some people may get very sick or even die from complications of the disease. That's why it is important to get medical help right away if you develop symptoms.



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