



Legionnaires' Disease Frequently Asked Questions

What is Legionnaires' disease?

Legionnaires' disease (or *Legionellosis*) is a type of pneumonia. It is caused by a type of bacteria (*Legionella*) that grows 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 (for example, by inhaling contaminated mist from faucets, showers, whirlpools or cooling towers). People who are sick cannot make others sick.

Who is at risk?

Groups at high risk include people who are middle-aged 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 resemble other types of pneumonia and can include fever, chills, muscle aches and cough. 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 symptoms such as fever, chills and cough, call a doctor and get checked for pneumonia. If you have a medical condition that affects your breathing, like emphysema, or if you are a smoker, ask your doctor about testing for Legionnaires' disease.

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. In rare cases, people may get very sick or even die from complications of the disease.