

LEGIONELLA AND LEGIONNAIRES DISEASE

What is legionella?

Legionellosis is a term for diseases caused by legionella bacteria. This includes the most serious Legionnaires' disease, as well as the less serious conditions of Pontiac fever and Lochgoilhead fever.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms of Legionnaires' disease are similar to the symptoms of the flu:

- high temperature, feverishness and chills
- cough
- muscle pains
- headache
- pneumonia
- diarrhoea
- Mental confusion.

How is it diagnosed?

It can be diagnosed with a urine test. Clinical history should include relevant travel history.



How is it treated?

The illness is treated with antibiotics. Legionnaires' disease is not known to spread from person to person.

Are there Legionella risks in my workplace?

Any water system, with the right environmental conditions, could be a source for legionella bacteria growth.

What increases the risk in your water systems?

The water temperature is between 20–45 °C. Breathable aerosol droplet can be created i.e. cooling tower, water outlets, showers, humidifiers, indoor water fountains etc. Water is stored and recirculated and is likely to contain nutrients for the organism to grow e.g. rust, sludge, organic matter and biofilm.

Managing the risk of legionella in water systems.

Your employer has a responsibility to identify and manage risks of legionella in your workplace.

Please contact the Infection Control team on 01744 456314 for further advice/support.