

Legionella and Legionnaires' Disease



Information

What is Legionnaires' disease?

Legionnaires' disease can be caught by breathing in an aerosol containing an infectious dose of legionella bacteria (legionella pneumophila sero group 1). It has an incubation period of 5 to 10 days.

Symptoms include:

- Serious pneumonia symptoms.
- Fever, headache, cough, and muscular aches.
- Delirium, diarrhea, & vomiting.

Treatments and prognosis:

- It can be treated with antibiotics.
- Recovery is often slow with residual lung damage.
- There is a 12 % fatality rate.

Who is most at risk?

Anyone can catch Legionnaires' disease however risks increase with:

- Suppressed immunity.
- Existing illness.
- Chronic respiratory disease.
- Lung, heart, or kidney disease.
- Smokers.
- Age 45+
- More common in males, although anyone can contract it.

Where does it come from?

- Water with temperatures between 20 - 45°C, particularly around 37°C.
- Bacterial growth is encouraged by stagnation, sludge, slime, algae, scale, corrosion products & especially biofilms.
- A PH of 6-8. PH is a measure of how acidic/basic water is. The range goes from 0 - 14, with 7 being neutral. PHs of less than 7 indicate acidity, whereas a pH of greater than 7 indicates a base. Water is normally around PH 6-8.5.

What should you do?

As a tenant Papworth Trust encourages you to keep your home as safe as it can be.

Some tips are:

- Clean and disinfect showers at least quarterly.

- Flush little used outlets weekly - take appropriate steps during flushing to avoid exposure to aerosols.
- Regularly clean and disinfect the hot and cold taps in the property to avoid scale build up.
- Avoid outside taps and hosepipes.
- In warmer weather where tank storage temperatures are likely to be higher than normal run the water until it gets cold.
- If you are away and or do not use a certain outlet for 7 days or more then run the outlet by turning it on gradually and allow it to run to drain for at least 5 minutes.

Contact Papworth Trust if you are worried or concerned on repairsandmaintenance@papworthtrust.org.uk or on 0330 678 0008.

Document control

Owner	Senior Business Manager – Property
Approver(s)	CEO
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Version tracker

Version number	Date	Comments/Reason for issue
1.0	June 2018	New information leaflet
2.0	June 2021	Reviewed.
3.0	September 2023	Reviewed and minor changes made in accordance with Papworth Trust's Legionella Management Plan.