

# 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 prevalence 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

Contact Papworth Trust if you are worried or concerned on [repairsandmaintenance@papworthtrust.org.uk](mailto:repairsandmaintenance@papworthtrust.org.uk) or on 0330 678 0008.