

FACT SHEET

Legionnaires' Disease (Legionella)

What is Legionnaires' disease?

- Legionella bacteria creates two different illnesses:
 - o Legionnaires' disease, a type of severe pneumonia.
 - o Pontiac fever, a mild illness often causing a flu-like illness.

What are the symptoms?

- Typically, it presents as pneumonia, and persons may have fever, chills, cough, body aches, headache, tiredness and loss of appetite.

How is Legionnaires' disease spread?

- Breathing in mist containing Legionella bacteria. Please note:
 - o **Legionnaires' disease is not contagious.** o **You cannot get Legionnaires' disease from another person** (it isn't spread person-to-person).
 - o **You cannot get Legionnaires' disease from drinking contaminated water.**

Who gets Legionnaires' disease?

- **Most healthy people exposed to Legionella bacteria don't get sick.** Adults ages 50 and older, those who smoke, individuals with chronic lung conditions or the immunocompromised are most at-risk.

How soon do symptoms appear?

- For Legionnaires' disease, it's typically 2-10 days.

How long is a person infectious?

- You cannot get Legionnaires' disease from another person.

What is the treatment?

- Antibiotics are used to treat Legionnaires' disease.

Do infected people need to be excluded from school, work or childcare?

- No. Legionnaires' disease is not spread person-to-person.

How do I get tested for Legionnaires' disease?

- **Testing for Legionella is done with a urine sample.** If you're experiencing symptoms such as cough, fever, shortness of breath, muscle aches or headache (especially older adults and those with underlying conditions), seek medical care promptly through your primary care provider or an Express Care.
- If symptoms are more severe or life-threatening, go to the nearest emergency department.
- Generally, results can be available within 24 hours, and using an emergency department will **not** return results faster.

What do I do if I test positive?

- Follow your providers instructions which generally include, take your medications as prescribed, get plenty of rest and drink fluids. If there are changes in your condition or symptoms, call your provider.