



What is Legionnaires' disease?

- A respiratory condition caused by a type of bacteria called *Legionella*. The bacteria are found naturally in the environment, usually in the water. *Legionella* grows best in warm water like the kind found in:
 - Cooling towers
 - Hot tubs
 - Hot water tanks
 - Large plumbing systems
 - Decorative fountains
 - Pools

Who is at risk?

- Individuals 50 years and older
- Current and former smokers
- Individuals with chronic lung disease, such as emphysema or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Individuals having weakened immune systems from diseases like cancer, diabetes, or kidney failure
- Individuals taking medications that weaken the immune system

What are symptoms that could occur?

- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Headache
- High fever
- Muscle aches
- Pneumonia

Doctors may order chest x-rays or physical exams to check for pneumonia. Doctors will also order tests.

How is it diagnosed and treated?

- Primary care provider evaluation and laboratory testing
- Treatment with antibiotics (drugs that kill bacteria in the body)

How is it spread?

- Breathing mist or vapor (small droplets of water) from a contaminated water source, or a source not properly cleaned
- Rarely spread from person-to-person
- You cannot get Legionnaires' disease from drinking the water

How can Legionnaires' disease be prevented?

- Because high water temperatures make it hard to maintain the disinfectant levels needed to kill germs like *Legionella*, making sure that the hot tub or pool has the right disinfectant and pH levels is essential
- You do not need a filter to eliminate *Legionella* in your drinking water

Are there complications?

- Like other respiratory illnesses, individuals with other health issues are at greater risk of complications

If I have any other questions, whom can I contact?

- Call the Genesee County Health Department at 810-257-1017