



Notice to Central Harlem about Legionnaires' Disease

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC Health Department) is investigating a cluster of Legionnaires' disease in Central Harlem (ZIP codes 10027, 10030, 10035, 10037, and 10039).

The risk to most people is low, but if you live or work around these ZIP codes and have flu-like symptoms, see a health care provider right away. Symptoms include cough, fever, chills, muscle aches, and shortness of breath. For the updated number of cases, visit nyc.gov/health/legionnaires.

The likely source of the bacteria causing this pneumonia in the community is a cooling tower in the affected area. Cooling towers are water systems usually found on the top of buildings. They control the temperature of cooling systems, such as central air conditioning or refrigeration. The cooling towers spray mist from the top that can contain the bacteria. All of the cooling towers in the affected area are being tested by the Health Department.

This is not an issue with any building's plumbing system. It is safe for you to drink water, bathe, shower, cook, and use your air conditioner.

Frequently Asked Questions About Legionnaires' Disease

- **What is Legionnaires' disease?** Legionnaires' disease is a pneumonia (lung infection) caused by breathing in bacteria (*Legionella*). *Legionella* bacteria are found naturally in the environment and grow in warm water.
- **Is the disease contagious?** No. Legionnaires' disease is not spread from person to person. People can only get sick by breathing in water vapor containing the bacteria. People who are sick cannot make others sick.
- **Who is at risk?** Groups at higher risk include people who are age 50 and older, people who smoke, people with chronic lung disease, and people who have a condition or take medicine that weakens their immune system.
- **What are the symptoms of Legionnaires' disease?** Symptoms are like the flu and can include fever, chills, muscle aches, cough, and shortness of breath. Some people may also have headaches, fatigue (tiredness), loss of appetite, confusion, or diarrhea.
- **What should I do if I think I have Legionnaires' disease?** If you have flu-like symptoms, seek medical attention right away. This is especially important if you have a health condition that affects your breathing, such as emphysema, or if you smoke.
- **What is the treatment for Legionnaires' disease?** The disease is treated with antibiotics. Most people get better with early treatment, although they may need to be hospitalized. Some people may get very sick or even die from complications of the disease — it is important to get medical help right away if you develop symptoms.

For more information, call **311** or visit nyc.gov/health/legionnaires