



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE
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2025 Health Alert #4: Cluster of Legionnaires' Disease in Harlem

Please distribute to staff in Internal Medicine, Pulmonary and Intensive Care Medicine, Geriatrics, Primary Care, Infectious Diseases, Emergency Medicine, Family Medicine, Laboratory Medicine, and Infection Control/Epidemiology.

- The New York City (NYC) Health Department is currently responding to a cluster of individuals with Legionnaires' disease in Harlem.
 - Clinicians should remain alert for possible cases of legionellosis and conduct appropriate diagnostic testing.
 - Legionnaires' disease cannot be clinically distinguished from other causes of pneumonia.
 - Test for *Legionella* by respiratory culture, polymerase chain reaction (PCR), and urine antigen, especially if testing for other respiratory infections has been negative.
 - Promptly report cases to the NYC Health Department and submit all confirmed *Legionella* isolates to the NYC Public Health Laboratory (PHL) for sub-typing and whole genome sequencing.
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July 28, 2025

The NYC Health Department is actively responding to a cluster of individuals with Legionnaires' disease in Central Harlem (impacted ZIP codes: 10027, 10030, 10035, and 10037), which, as of July 28, 2025, includes 5 confirmed cases and no deaths. Additional cases are pending confirmation.

NYC clinicians should maintain a high index of suspicion for legionellosis among all adults with pneumonia. Identification and diagnostic testing of Legionnaires' disease is critical for informing treatment decisions and helping the NYC Health Department identify and address outbreaks, particularly through matching of clinical isolates to environmental isolates.

Epidemiology: Legionnaires' disease follows a seasonal pattern in NYC, with an increased number of cases reported from June to October each year.

Clinical Presentation: Clinical suspicion of Legionnaires' disease should be elevated for individuals presenting with pneumonia, especially if they report residence in the above ZIP codes, recent travel, recent inpatient care at a healthcare facility, recent exposure to hot tubs, or if the person lives in a congregate setting such as a long-term care facility. People at higher risk for Legionnaires' disease include persons ages 50 years or older; current or former smokers, and

persons with chronic lung disease, immunocompromising conditions, systemic malignancy, or comorbid conditions such as diabetes or renal/hepatic failure.

Testing: Diagnostic testing for *Legionella* includes respiratory culture, polymerase chain reaction (PCR), and urine antigen testing. Respiratory tract specimens for *Legionella* culture should ideally be obtained before initiation of antibiotics, although antibiotics should not be delayed in order to obtain a specimen. Cultures can be ordered after the initiation of antibiotics. See the Diagnostic Testing table [here](#) for more details.

Treatment: Empiric treatment of community-acquired pneumonia in hospitalized patients should include adequate coverage for *Legionella* with either a macrolide (e.g., azithromycin) or a respiratory fluoroquinolone (e.g., levofloxacin). The CDC provides detailed information on [clinical guidance](#) and treatment regimens for *Legionella* infections.

Public Health Reporting: Promptly report cases to the NYC Health Department by calling the Provider Access Line at 866.692.3641 during business hours or 212.764.7667 on evenings, weekends, and holidays. Laboratories should send all confirmed *Legionella* isolates to the NYC PHL for serotyping and whole genome sequencing using PHL [eOrder](#). Select *Legionella* serotyping and send isolates to 455 1st Avenue, New York, NY 10016.

As always, we appreciate your collaboration to address Legionnaires' disease and other infectious disease concerns in the city.

References:

- July 1, 2025 NYS and NYC Legionellosis Health Advisory: <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/han/advisory/2025/han-advisory-14-legionella.pdf>
- CDC Clinical Guidance for Legionella Infections: <https://www.cdc.gov/legionella/hcp/clinicalguidance/index.html>
- NYC PHL eOrder: https://www1.nyc.gov/account/login.htm?spName=a816-phleorder.nyc.govPHLeOrder&samlContext=us1_8176884_dabf54ad-9076-4cf8-a44b-c6ddfdb45bdf