

LEGIONELLA:

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Legionella is a type of bacteria found naturally in fresh water, including tap water. Usually, water treatment keeps Legionella at low levels that are harmless to us – but in stagnant or slow-moving water, the bacteria could grow to harmful levels in the pipes in your home, hot water heater, unused garden hoses, humidifiers, CPAP machines, or power washers. Breathing in the mist from water containing Legionella can cause a serious illness called **Legionnaires' disease**. The good news: a few simple habits at home can lower the risk of getting sick from Legionella.



WHO IS AT HIGHER RISK?

- ◆ Adults 50+
- ◆ Smokers or former smokers
- ◆ Those with chronic lung disease
- ◆ Those with weakened immune systems
- ◆ Those with diabetes, kidney, or liver disease



KNOW THE SYMPTOMS

Cough, fever, shortness of breath, headache, muscle aches. Symptoms typically appear 2–14 days after exposure. **If you have these symptoms, especially after travel, call your doctor.**



WHERE LEGIONELLA CAN GROW

Stagnant water in:

- ◆ Hot water heaters
- ◆ Pipes and showerheads
- ◆ Water hoses
- ◆ Humidifiers, CPAP machines, nebulizers
- ◆ Hot tubs, fountains, power washers

PREVENTION CHECKLIST

- ☑ **Flush water after you've been away** for 3 or more days or there has been a disruption to the water supply. Run cold water for 5 minutes, run hot water until fully hot, then run for 5 more minutes.
- ☑ **Maintain your water heater.** Keep it at the manufacturer's recommended temperature. Drain a few gallons from the bottom of the tank once or twice a year to flush out sediment.
- ☑ **Clean what you can see.** Soak showerheads and faucet aerators in white vinegar for 1-2 hours, scrub and rinse.
- ☑ **Care for mist-makers.** Use distilled water in humidifiers, CPAP machines, and any mist-making devices. Drain and dry equipment after use, including power washers. Clean and maintain hot tubs according to manufacturers instructions.



KEY TAKEAWAY

Keeping water moving, clean, and at the right temperature is the best defense against Legionella.



Keep it
moving



Keep it
clean



Keep it at the
right temperature

