

LEGIONNAIRES' DISEASE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is Legionnaires' disease?

Legionnaires' disease, also known as legionellosis, is a type of pneumonia that is caused by bacteria (*Legionella*) that grow in warm water. The infection is *not* spread person-to-person—people only get sick by breathing in water vapor containing the bacteria. People who are sick with Legionnaires' disease cannot make others sick.

Who is most likely to get sick?

- People aged 50 years or older, especially those that are cigarette smokers.
- People with chronic lung disease, those with weakened immune systems, and those who take medicines that weaken their immune systems (immunosuppressive drugs).

Symptoms to look for:

- Fever
- Chills
- Cough
- Diarrhea
- Abdominal Pain
- Muscle Aches
- Fatigue
- Headache

What should you do if you have these symptoms?

If you have these symptoms, seek medical attention right away, especially if you have a medical condition that affects your breathing (like emphysema) or if you are a smoker. Tell your healthcare provider that you are concerned about Legionnaires' disease.

How is Legionnaires' disease diagnosed?

A healthcare provider can help diagnose Legionnaires' disease through physical examinations, chest x-rays or CT scans, and laboratory tests.

How is Legionnaires' disease treated?

Legionnaires' disease can be treated with antibiotics. People who seek medical attention immediately after developing symptoms have a better chance of avoiding complications from the disease, such as becoming very ill or death.

For more information:

- Contact your doctor.
- Contact the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, Division of Disease Control at 215-685-6742.

