

LEGIONELLA

Helpful Information

Transmission: Legionella bacteria occurs naturally in freshwater environments. It can enter a water supply and can come in contact with people through inhalation via showers and humidifiers. It becomes a health concern when the bacteria grows and spreads in larger building water systems.

Symptoms: mild flu-like symptoms that include muscle aches, fever, cough, shortness of breath.

Most at risk: majority of people never develop any symptoms. However, smokers and people with COPD increase your chance of getting sick. Having a weakened immune system can also increase risk. **Children are rarely affected;** majority of all cases are contracted by people over the age of 50.

Treatment: treated with antibiotics prescribed by your doctor after confirmation of Legionnaires disease via a urine or phlegm sample.



TESTING FOR LEGIONELLA IS AN EU REGULATORY REQUIREMENT. CURRENTLY THE US DOES NOT TEST FOR LEGIONELLA. IMCOM-E REQUIRES ALL INSTALLATIONS TO FOLLOW THE “FINAL GOVERNING STANDARDS” WHICH COMBINES THE STRICTER OF EUROPE, GERMAN, AND US REGULATIONS.

Legionella bacteria thrive in stagnant water temperatures between 77 °F (25 °C) and 113 °F (45 °C). However, they quickly die off as temperatures rise above 140 °F (60°C). Boiler temps are increased in Army Family Housing to over 60°C overnight to prevent legionella growth.

Since legionella are a respiratory ailment, drinking legionella containing water does not represent a health risk. Exposure to legionella occurs when water vapor or droplets containing the bacteria are inhaled from sources such as showers, humidifiers, cooling towers, and air conditioning systems. Public baths, waterfalls, whirlpools, and fountains may also cause exposure. Legionella bacteria are not contagious but do require immediate medical care.



How can I protect myself?

As long as you use your showers regularly and stagnant water is avoided, there is no reason to believe that you have legionella in your water. However, long standing idle showers after several weeks due to TDY or annual leave may represent a hazard. In this case, it's best to first flush the hot water line with highest possible pressure and temperature for a few minutes and ventilate, before stepping into the shower. This best management practice also applies in hotels or wherever else you are staying.

Where are the results?

Your DPW Environmental Division maintains a testing database and is pleased to share testing results of your building. During monitoring events, all residents receive detailed information about the testing campaign, and you are encouraged to participate.

POC: Ms. Ali McLeod

CIV: 0611-548-4093

Email: Mary.a.mcleod8.civ@army.mil