

CDRS

Communicable Disease Reporting System

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE FACT SHEET **LEGIONELLOSIS**

Legionellosis is an infection caused by the bacterium *Legionella pneumophila*. Legionnaires' Disease acquired its name in 1976 when an outbreak of pneumonia occurred among persons attending a convention of the American Legion in Philadelphia.

Symptoms

- Patients with Legionnaires' disease usually have fever, chills, and a cough, which may be dry or may produce sputum.
- Some patients also have muscle aches, headache, tiredness, loss of appetite, and, occasionally, diarrhea.
- Laboratory tests may show that these patients' kidneys are not functioning properly.
- Chest X-rays often show pneumonia.
- It is difficult to distinguish Legionnaires' disease from other types of pneumonia by symptoms alone; other tests are required for diagnosis.
- The time between the patient's exposure to the bacterium and the onset of illness for Legionnaires' disease is 2 to 10 days.

Transmission

- Outbreaks of legionellosis have occurred after persons have breathed mists that come from a water source (e.g., air conditioning cooling towers, whirlpool spas, showers) contaminated with Legionella bacteria.
- Persons may be exposed to these mists in homes, workplaces, hospitals, or public places.
- Legionellosis is not passed from person to person.
- Legionella organisms can be found in many types of water systems. However, the bacteria reproduce to high numbers in warm, stagnant water (90°-105° F), such as that found in certain plumbing systems and hot water tanks, cooling towers and evaporative condensers of large air-conditioning systems, and whirlpool spas.
- Cases of legionellosis have been identified throughout the United States and in several foreign countries. It is believed to occur worldwide.

Treatment

- Antibiotics are currently recommended for treating persons with Legionnaires' disease.

All information is general in nature and is not intended to be used as a substitute for appropriate professional advice.

Franklin County



Board of Health

Report Disease With Ease - 24 hours a day

www.cdrsinfo.com

Columbus and Franklin County Communicable Disease Reporting System

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