

# LEGIONELLOSIS

(Legionnaires' disease, Pontiac fever)



Legionellosis is an infection caused by *Legionella* bacteria. There are two different types of legionellosis: Pontiac fever and Legionnaires' disease. Pontiac fever is a mild respiratory illness and Legionnaires' disease is a type of pneumonia. Most of the time, legionellosis happens as a single event, but outbreaks involving large numbers of people have happened. Those who have a compromised immune system, who smoke, or who are 50 years or older are more likely to be affected by legionellosis.

## How is it spread?



- ▶ *Legionella* bacteria can be found in both natural and man-made water sources.
- ▶ *Legionella* bacteria grow well in warm water (e.g., cooling towers, hot tubs, plumbing systems, hot water heaters, decorative fountains).
- ▶ People become sick when they breathe in mist from a water source that has *Legionella* bacteria.
- ▶ It cannot normally be spread from person to person.

## What are the signs and symptoms?



*Symptoms usually start two to 10 days after breathing in mist or water droplets that have Legionella bacteria.*

- ▶ Muscle aches
- ▶ Headache
- ▶ Tiredness
- ▶ Loss of appetite
- ▶ Coughing
- ▶ Fever
- ▶ Diarrhea (occasionally)

## What are the treatment options?



- ▶ Treatment depends on whether the person has Pontiac fever or Legionnaires' disease.
- ▶ Pontiac fever requires supportive care only and will go away on its own.
- ▶ Legionnaires' disease requires treatment with antibiotics.

## How can it be prevented?



- ▶ There are no vaccines against *Legionella* bacteria.
- ▶ To prevent *Legionella* bacteria from growing, it is important to make sure that water systems in buildings are being properly cared for and maintained.

