


# 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 more severe and leads to 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?

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- ▶ *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 be spread from person to person


## What are the signs and symptoms?

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- ▶ Muscle aches
  - ▶ Headache
  - ▶ Tiredness
  - ▶ Loss of appetite
  - ▶ Coughing
  - ▶ High fever (102-105°F)
  - ▶ Diarrhea (occasionally)

## What are the treatment options?

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- ▶ 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?

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- ▶ 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

