

# LEGIONNAIRES' DISEASE ALERT

Information for NSW GPs

*Please distribute this information to all staff*

1. Four cases of confirmed infection with *Legionella pneumophila* have been notified in the past two days
2. All the cases have visited the Sydney CBD area in the incubation period
3. Have a high index of suspicion for cases presenting with respiratory symptoms and/or features suggestive of pneumonia and notify your public health unit
4. Contact your local hospital infectious diseases unit for assistance if needed

## Summary

There has been a cluster of *Legionella pneumophila* notified with four confirmed cases, all caused by serogroup 1, with onset between 27/2/16 and 3/3/16. All the cases visited the Sydney CBD area in the incubation period.

## Modes of transmission

- *Legionella pneumophila* bacteria can contaminate air conditioning cooling towers, whirlpool spas, and other bodies of water. It is spread from the mist given off by these water bodies, not the air conditioning itself. People walking outside or driving past may be exposed.
- Legionnaires' disease is not spread from person to person.
- Typical incubation period is 2 to 10 days, but more commonly 5 to 6 days.

## Symptoms of Legionnaires' disease

Legionnaires' disease usually causes fever, chills, a cough and shortness of breath. Cases may also have muscle aches, headache, tiredness, loss of appetite and diarrhoea. Cases may be very sick with pneumonia. Most people recover but the disease is occasionally fatal, particularly when it occurs in the context of other co-morbidities or immune suppression.

## Diagnosis

- It is difficult to distinguish Legionnaires' disease from other types of pneumonia by symptoms alone. Chest X-rays help diagnose pneumonia but the diagnosis of Legionnaires' disease requires special tests.
- Samples and testing: request sputum (culture) and urine (antigen test)
- Contact your local public health unit for more information

## Treatment

Consult [Therapeutic Guidelines: Antibiotics](#) or local hospital infectious diseases specialist for treatment options

## Public Health Response

It is important to urgently notify your public health unit of any suspected case.

## Further Information:

- Contact your local public health unit on **1300 066 055**
- NSW Legionnaires' Disease website:  
<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/legionnaires/Pages/default.aspx>

Yours sincerely



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