

LEGIONNAIRES' DISEASE ALERT

Information for NSW Clinicians

1. Six recent cases of confirmed infection with *Legionella pneumophila* all have spent time in the central Sydney CBD during their exposure period
2. Have a high index of suspicion for cases presenting with respiratory symptoms and/or features suggestive of pneumonia and notify your public health unit

Summary

There is a cluster of *Legionella pneumophila* serogroup 1 with six confirmed cases with onsets between 6 to 25 May. All the cases have spent time in the City of Sydney central CBD region in their incubation period. No single source for the cases has been identified, and it is possible that they are unrelated. All high priority cooling towers in the area have been inspected and sampled.

Modes of transmission

- *Legionella pneumophila* bacteria can contaminate air conditioning cooling towers, whirlpool spas, shower heads and other bodies of water. People walking outside or driving past may be exposed if they inhale aerosolised contaminated water.
- 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 with other co-morbidities or in the context of 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:
 - urine for *Legionella* urinary antigen test
 - sputum and or bronchial washings for *Legionella* culture and PCR
- For further information about testing, consult with your local laboratory, infectious disease physicians and local public health unit.

Treatment

Consult [Therapeutic Guidelines: Antibiotics](#) for treatment options.

Public Health Response

- Please 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>



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