

LEGIONELLA

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

LEGIONELLA AWARENESS WEEK | AUGUST 3–9, 2026

Knowledge is the first step in prevention. Here are answers to common questions about Legionella and how we can all help reduce risk.



Q: What is *Legionella*?

A: *Legionella* is a naturally occurring bacterium found in freshwater environments. It can grow in building water systems and may cause Legionnaires' disease, a serious form of pneumonia, or Pontiac fever, a milder flu-like illness.



Q: How do people get infected?

A: People become infected by breathing in small water droplets (aerosols) that contain *Legionella*. It is not spread from person to person or by drinking contaminated water.



Q: Where is *Legionella* commonly found?

A: *Legionella* can grow in building water systems such as cooling towers, hot tubs, whirlpool spas, decorative fountains, showerheads, faucets, and any system with warm water and sediment.



Q: Who is most at risk?

A: People over 50, smokers, and individuals with chronic lung disease, weakened immune systems, or other underlying health conditions are at greater risk.



Q: What conditions allow *Legionella* to grow?

A: Warm water (77°F–113°F), stagnation, sediment, and scale provide ideal conditions for *Legionella* growth.



Q: How can buildings reduce the risk of *Legionella*?

A: Implement a water management program that includes system assessment, control measures, routine monitoring, and verification. Follow industry standards such as ANSI/ASHRAE Standard 188.



Q: What are common signs and symptoms of Legionnaires' disease?

A: Symptoms include fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, muscle aches, and headache. Symptoms usually appear 2 to 10 days after exposure.



Q: What should I do if I think I have symptoms?

A: Seek medical attention right away and tell your healthcare provider about your possible exposure.



WORKING TOGETHER FOR SAFER WATER

By staying informed and taking proactive steps, we can protect public health and ensure safer water in our buildings and communities.



LEARN MORE

Visit AWT's Legionella Resource Center for tools, guidance, and best practices.
www.awt.org/legionella



REMEMBER:

Proper water management today helps prevent illness tomorrow.



Assess

Identify potential risks in your water systems.



Control

Implement and maintain effective control measures.



Monitor

Verify performance and continuously improve.