



# Legionella



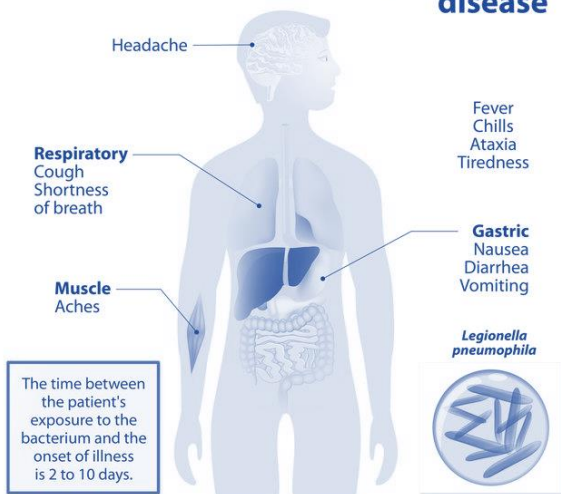
The genus Legionella is a pathogenic group of Gram-negative bacteria that includes the strain that cause legionellosis, a pneumonia-type illness called Legionnaires' disease and a mild flu-like illness called Pontiac fever.

Legionella is common in many environments, including soil and aquatic systems, with at least 50 species identified.

The largest and most common source of Legionnaires' disease outbreaks are air conditioning and industrial cooling towers primarily because of the risk for widespread circulation. Many governmental agencies, cooling tower manufacturers, and industrial trade organisations have developed design and maintenance guidelines for controlling the growth and proliferation of Legionella within cooling towers.

Research in the Journal of Infectious Diseases (2006) provided evidence that *L. pneumophila*, the causative agent of Legionnaires' disease, can travel at least 6 km from its source by airborne spread. It was previously believed that transmission of the bacterium was restricted to much shorter distances.

## Legionnaires' disease



## Did You Know?

Legionella acquired its name after an outbreak of a then-unknown "mystery disease" sickened 221 persons, causing 34 deaths. The outbreak was first noticed among people attending a convention of the American Legion—an association of U.S. military veterans in 1976.

## Sources of Legionella

Documented sources include:

- Cooling Towers
- Swimming Pools
- Domestic Water Systems and Showers
- Ice-making Machines
- Refrigerated Cabinets
- Whirlpool Spas
- Hot Springs
- Fountains
- Dental Equipment
- Soil
- Automobile Windshield Washer Fluid
- Industrial Coolant



If you are concerned about possible contamination of your water, please feel free to contact BN Kirk (Natal) cc on (031) 205 1245 or send an email to [labmanager@bnkirk.co.za](mailto:labmanager@bnkirk.co.za) for a full list of accredited tests and an obligation free quote.