

# Legionnaires' Disease

## INFORMATION SHEET

### What is it?

Legionnaires' Disease is a potentially fatal form of pneumonia which can be caused by the inhalation of small droplets of water contaminated by the Legionella bacteria. In domestic properties, the bacteria can flourish in water stored for over 5 days between 20°C and 45°C or when there is rust, sludge, scale or organic matter in the system.

The risk increases with age but some people are at higher risk including:

- people over 45 years of age
- smokers and heavy drinkers
- people suffering from chronic respiratory or kidney disease
- diabetes, lung and heart disease
- anyone with an impaired immune system



### What can I do?

Although the risk is low, it is important to follow these simple instructions to avoid potential infection. Possibly the biggest risk is when you have been away from the property for more than a week or so, e.g. on holiday, or when there are some additional taps/showers/toilets that are not used daily. Good practice is simply to:

- Run the hot water taps for 60 seconds to eliminate potential pathogens
- Flush shower heads for 60 seconds and avoid inhaling particles (to do this, remove from holder before turning on the shower, then hold down over plug hole to lessen risk of inhaling sprayed droplets)
- Shower heads should be dismantled and cleaned of scale and debris every 3 - 6 months
- Keep the hot water on your boiler system at a temperature above 50°C  
WARNING: be aware of scalding!
- Flush the toilet twice to circulate fresh water through the system and empty the cistern



### Keep in touch

We can help making your home safer, so please let us know if any of the following happens:

- The cold water is still running warm after you have initially run off any water which may have accumulated in the pipes. It should not be above 20°C
- There are problems with water flow, debris or discolouration in the water
- The boiler or hot water tank is not working properly, particularly if the water is not coming out of the taps at a sufficiently high temperature. It should come out at a temperature of 50°C after it has run for a minute at the latest
- If you plan to leave the property vacant for any extended period (over two weeks), please tell us. When you return you should flush the water system(s) through by running all outlets for a minute or so and flush the toilets a couple of times to renew cistern with fresh water.

Contact us:  0117 3210503

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