

Infectious Diseases

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LEGIONNAIRES' DISEASE



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Legionnaires' (LEE-juh-nares) disease is caused by *Legionella* bacteria. The name came from an outbreak of pneumonia (lung infection) in people attending a 1976 American Legion convention in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. *Legionella* bacteria like to grow in warm water and may be found in shower heads, hot tubs, or large water heater or air-conditioning systems. People can get sick by breathing in the mist from the contaminated water. Legionnaires' disease is uncommon, but it can be serious. Infected people can develop pneumonia, with fever, chills, cough, and breathing problems. People with Legionnaires' disease can be treated with antibiotics. Contaminated water systems can be disinfected to kill the *Legionella* bacteria.