Treatment for Legionnaires' disease

You may need to be admitted to hospital if you're diagnosed with Legionnaires' disease. Hospital treatment may include:

- Antibiotics given directly into a vein.
- Oxygen through a face mask or tubes in your nose.
- A machine to help you breathe.

When you start to feel better, you may be able to take antibiotic tablets at home. This treatment usually lasts between 1 to 3 weeks.

Most people make a full recovery, but it may take a few weeks for you to feel back to normal.

Useful links

NHS 24	Freephone 111 www.nhs24.scot
NHSinform	www.nhsinform.scot

Further information and help

For further information please contact:

NHS Western Isles Public Health Team
Email: wi.healthprotection@nhs.scot
Tel. 01870 603366 / 01851 708033

We are listening - how did we do?

We welcome your feedback, as it helps us evaluate the services we provide. If you would like to tell us about your experience:

- speak to a member of staff
- visit our website feedback section at: www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk or share your story at: www.careopinion.org.uk or tel. 0800 122 31 35
- tel. 01851 481814 and leave a message, or email wi.feedback@nhs.scot

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Disclaimer
The content of this leaflet is intended to augment, not replace, information provided by your clinician. It is not intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Reading this information does not create or replace a doctor-patient relationship or consultation. If required, please contact your doctor or other health care provider to assist you to interpret any of this information, or in applying the information to your individual needs.

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Eileanan Siar
Western Isles

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NHS Western Isles

Health Protection Team

Legionella



Patient information leaflet

What is Legionella?

Legionella is a bacteria, which is transmitted via water vapour. The risk increases when water:

- Is stored for prolonged periods
- Stagnates in tanks, pipes or hoses
- Is exposed to warm temperatures
- Is dispersed as a fine spray or mist that can be inhaled

It normally thrives when the water temperature is between 20°C to 45°C. There are two types of Legionella:

Legionella longbeachae is a species of legionella, which, if inhaled, can cause Pontiac Fever. This is a flu-like illness, sometimes resulting in severe lung infections.

Legionella pneumonophila if inhaled it could lead to Legionnaires' disease, a type of pneumonia.

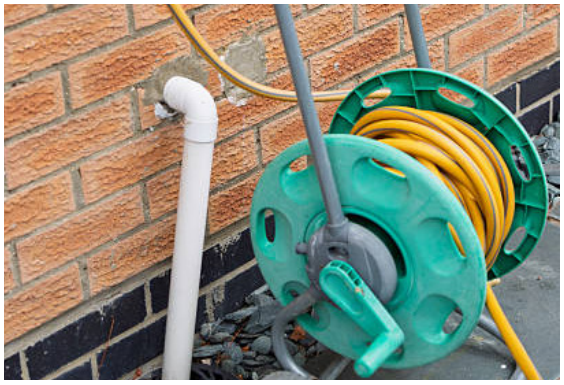
Symptoms

Symptoms of Legionnaires' disease include:

- A cough
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain or discomfort, particularly when breathing or coughing
- A high temperature (fever)
- Flu-like symptoms

Tips to keep you safe from Legionella

- Hot water storage cylinders should store water at 60°C or higher.
- Cold water should be stored and distributed below 20°C.
- Maintain spa pools, ice baths and whirlpool baths to guidelines.
- Flush out infrequently used showerheads and taps at least weekly and clean and de-scale shower heads and hoses at least quarterly.
- Do not store compost or potting soil in greenhouses as heat encourages Legionella to grow. Do not keep your head directly over a compost or soil bag when opening it.
- Consider wearing a dust mask when turning compost heaps.
- Empty the water out of garden hoses after use. Flush with mains water before use on a trickle, non-spray setting.
- Do not leave full hoses in the sun after use.
- Avoid using water from garden water butts when the temperature inside the butt is likely to rise above 20°C. Consider insulating water butts to keep temperatures low.
- Only use water from water butts via a watering can, do not use the water via a hosepipe or sprinkler.
- Clean water butts every year.



Phone 999 or go to the Emergency Department if:

- You have severe difficulty breathing – for example, you struggle to speak without pausing, gasping or choking.
- You have severe chest pain in the middle of your chest that isn't going away – it may feel like pressure, tightness or squeezing.
- You have pain that spreads to your arms, back, neck and jaw.
- You feel more drowsy than usual or find it more difficult to wake up.
- Your lips or skin are turning very pale, blue or grey – on brown or black skin this is easier to see on the palms of your hands.

Speak to your GP practice urgently

If you have symptoms of Legionnaires' disease, like:

- A cough that's lasted more than 3 weeks
- Coughing up blood (haemoptysis)
- Chest pain that happens when breathing in or coughing
- Feeling short of breath

If your GP practice is closed, phone 111.

You should tell your GP or healthcare professional where you've been in the last 10 days. This can include a hotel, spa or hospital.