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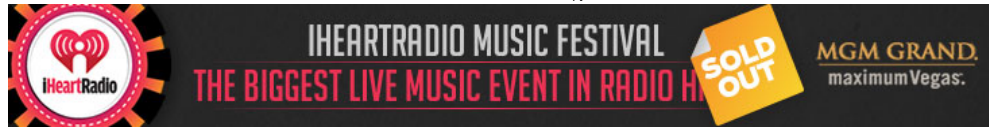
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## Possible Legionnaires' Disease Outbreak

Monday, August 8, 2011 [Email article](#) | [Print article](#) | [RSS](#)



Officials in Nebraska are warning of a possible Legionnaires' disease outbreak with ties to the city of North Platte.

The Office of Epidemiology at the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services has learned of two cases of Legionnaires' disease in people who both reported having traveled to North Platte in the days prior to their illnesses. The first case was reported in a Sarpy County resident who developed the illness on July 11th. The second case was reported in a Wyoming resident who stayed in the same hotel as the other person at a later date. Officials are investigating if the two have anything else in common.

DHHS is asking doctors in the North Platte area to be vigilant for cases of Legionnaires' disease among their patients and consider it as part of a differential diagnosis in patients with compatible signs and symptoms. Symptoms include high fever, chills, and a cough. Some people may also suffer from muscle aches and headaches. High risk groups include people over the age of 50, smokers, people with immune problems, or those with chronic conditions. Officials compare the symptoms to those of Pneumonia.

If you suspect you might have the disease, officials are asking you to contact your local public health department or the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Legionnaires' disease is caused by a type of bacteria called Legionella. The bacteria got its name in 1976, when many people who went to a Philadelphia convention of the American Legion suffered from an outbreak of this disease, a type of pneumonia, or lung infection. Although this type of bacteria was around before 1976, more illness from Legionnaires' disease is being detected now, due mostly to improvements in diagnosing and reporting the disease.

Each year, between 8,000 and 18,000 people are hospitalized with Legionnaires' disease in the U.S. However, many infections are not diagnosed or reported, so this number may be higher. More illness is usually found in the summer and early fall, but it can happen any time of year.

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