

Six cases of Legionnaires' confirmed from Round Rock hotel

WILLIAMSON COUNTY, TEXAS - Health officials say the number of cases of Legionnaires' disease connected to a Round Rock hotel has grown to six.

According to the [Williamson County and Cities Health District](#), the new case involves someone who stayed at the SpringHill Suites in Round Rock. Four other guests and one employee have also been diagnosed with Legionnaires'.

Deb Strahler with WCCHD told KVUE the State Department of Health Services was notified about the first two Legionnaires' cases on Sept. 29, and the second two cases were confirmed Oct. 2. SpringHill Suites said in an Oct. 4 statement there was a potential fifth case, which was confirmed by health department officials Oct. 6.

"With Legionnaires' Disease, one case is certainly an emergency. One case," explained John Teel, executive director of the Williamson County and Cities Health District.

The hotel added that all of the individuals with the disease had been in the hotel building "at various times this past summer."

"It can take a while for that to get back to the county that they were infected, and a lot of times -- it's never known where they were infected," explained Teel, as symptoms can take two to 12 days to develop.

Symptoms include cough, fever, shortness of breath, muscle aches and head aches.

Currently, the health department is conducting tests to find the source of the bacteria.

The hotel is cooperating with the health department, and have enlisted a third-party vendor to investigate the source, said Strahler.

In a statement to KVUE, SpringHill Suites wrote:

The SpringHill Suites Austin Round Rock recently received notice from the Williamson County, TX, Health District that it is investigating reported incidents of Legionnaires Disease. The investigation centers on four individuals who had been at the hotel at various times this past summer; a fifth person was identified yesterday. In consultation with the Williamson County Health District, and with an abundance of caution, the hotel has already engaged an expert third-party firm that specializes in remediating environmental health issues. Both this firm and the hotel are continuing to work hand-in-hand with the Health District to identify any possible source of contamination and rectify them immediately. The hotel also voluntarily elected to close the property to guests beginning on Wednesday, October 4th at 5PM CDT. The hotel anticipates it will remain closed until the remediation can be fully completed and the property clears all inspections. This process, and the subsequent inspections, typically take about three weeks. We hope that the hotel, after obtaining approval from the Health Department, may be able to reopen by about October 24.

The SpringHill Suites Austin Round Rock apologizes to all guests who are inconvenienced by this unforeseen incident, and the hotel is working to relocate all current guests, and those with existing reservations, to nearby hotels. We trust that our prompt and complete action to address this important concern will quickly remedy the situation and enable us to resume business as usual.

Legionnaires' disease is a severe type of pneumonia, which people can contract from inhaling the legionella bacteria in small droplets of water, according to the [Mayo Clinic](#).

"It does not spread from the sick person to any other people. It cannot spread by being coughed or sneezed on by the person who has Legionnaire's disease," said Teel, explaining those who work or walk near the hotel are not at risk for sickness.

The [Center for Disease Control](#) reports legionella bacteria can spread in man-made water systems such as showers, faucets, air conditioning units, hot tubs and large plumbing systems.

"What (the first three cases) all had in common upon interview by their county health departments when they went back home is that all three either used the hot tub, or one of the three cases pulled up a chair besides it every night for multiple nights and watched relatives swim in the pool," explained Teel, adding the fourth, an employee, had access to that area.

Officials are now asking those who stayed at that hotel recently to be cognizant of the symptoms.

"If anybody have stayed at (that location) from mid-September until yesterday, they need to be on the lookout for pneumonia or flu-like symptoms. If they have those symptoms, they need to seek medical help immediately. This is a dangerous illness," Teel said.

To learn more about Legionnaires' Disease, click [here](#).

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