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Legionnaires' Disease Bacteria Discovered at Aria

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 By Calvert Collins, Reporter - [email](#)
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LAS VEGAS -- Letters are going out to 18,000 people who stayed at Aria at CityCenter last month, warning them about possible exposure to a bacterium called Legionella, which can lead to Legionnaires' disease.

The hotel says its water supply had high levels of the bacteria between June 21st and July 4th and wants guests to know in case they start feeling sick.

Vegastripping.com has [posted a letter](#) a guest received from the hotel. MGM has also set up a [website](#) with information.

So far, no one who stayed at the hotel during that time frame has reported being sick. But, six people who stayed at Aria between December 2009 and April 2011 contracted Legionnaires' disease by inhaling the bacteria from the hotel's water.

It could have come from a shower or spa, but it is very common for this bacteria to live in the water supply of large buildings.

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"It's everywhere. The idea is that it's not usual in high enough concentrations to cause a problem," said Patricia Rowley, epidemiology manager with the Southern Nevada Health District. "If, for instance, it was in the shower head, you're creating a mist right in the shower when you get in. That mist could contain the bacteria."

The health district says most guests have no reaction to it, but young children, the elderly and anyone with a weak immune system are most susceptible. Symptoms are similar to pneumonia and include high fever, chills, cough, fatigue, muscle aches and headaches.

The six people who tested positive were reported to the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, who then called the health district in Nevada. They told Aria officials to check the water supply, and that's when they found elevated levels of the bacteria between June 21st and July 4th.

"That's the only time we know there was a presence of Legionella in the hotel, and therefore, we want to be certain anyone who was there who may not be feeling well, they need to seek medical advice," said MGM Resorts Senior Vice President of Public Affairs Alan Feldman. "Most people who get exposed to Legionella are fine, but there's no reason to take any chances."

"We don't know who the six are. We don't know when they stayed in the hotel. We don't know if they were all there together or at completely different times. So, we don't know," Feldman said.

Dave Johnson, a tourist from Corpus Christi, Texas, has questions of his own. Johnson left Aria right before the June 21 start date of those recent high bacteria levels.

"I looked back and I thought, 'Man, I was there the day before.' It's like I had this funny feeling inside. It was like, how does something like this happen? How does Legionnaires' disease enter an opulent casino like that," he asked. "What happens in Vegas apparently doesn't always stay in Vegas."

Tessi John and Shelley Marzoq are enjoying their stay at Aria. They recently learned about they bacteria concerns.

"It is surprising, you know," John said. "It puts a question in the back of your mind of kinda' what's going on?"

"I'm okay with it. I think we're more likely to win gambling than to get that," said Marzoq.

Aria crews have since chlorinated and super-heated the water to kill the Legionella, and no other MGM properties have had issues with the bacteria. There was a Legionella incident at the Polo Towers back in 2008 when four people got sick and at the Playboy Mansion in Los Angeles earlier this year where 200 people had symptoms.

It can be treated with antibiotics, and MGM Resorts says if you were exposed between June 21st and July 4th, they will pay for your treatment.

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