

NYC Health Officials ID Source Of Legionnaires' Outbreak In Upper Manhattan

August 15, 2018 at 8:36 am Filed Under: [Legionnaires Disease](#), [Local TV](#), [Washington Heights](#)

NEW YORK (CBSNewYork) – The New York City [health](#) department has identified the source of a [Legionnaires' disease](#) outbreak that [sickened dozens of people](#) in Upper Manhattan.

Health officials believe it originated in a [cooling tower](#) at the Sugar Hill [Project](#) on Saint Nicholas Avenue.



Legionella bacteria from the cooling tower matched strains collected from patients.

In total, 27 [people](#) were sickened in Washington Heights and Hamilton Heights, including [one person who died](#).

Legionnaires' disease is a type of pneumonia caused by Legionella bacteria that grow in warm water. It can be contracted by breathing in water vapor containing the bacteria. The disease isn't contagious and can be treated by antibiotics if caught early.

The cooling tower has since been disinfected.

For more information, [click here](#).



Eyewitness News

Saturday, July 14, 2018 11:18PM

WASHINGTON HEIGHTS, Manhattan (WABC) -- The number of cases of Legionnaires' Disease in a Washington Heights cluster has risen to 16, health officials say.

Seven people remain hospitalized following the outbreak in Lower Washington Heights and Hamilton Heights. All suspect cooling towers have been cleaned, or are in the process of being cleaned.

Anyone in the area with flu-like symptoms should see a doctor immediately.

RELATED: FACTS: What is Legionnaires' disease?

Legionnaires' disease is a form of bacterial pneumonia. The elderly are at the highest risk. The disease is potentially fatal but can be effectively treated with an early diagnosis.

People contract Legionnaires' disease by breathing in water vapor that contains bacteria. Health officials are testing water from all cooling tower systems in the area of the cluster.

Adults with flu-like symptoms, cough, fever or difficulty breathing should contact a physician immediately.

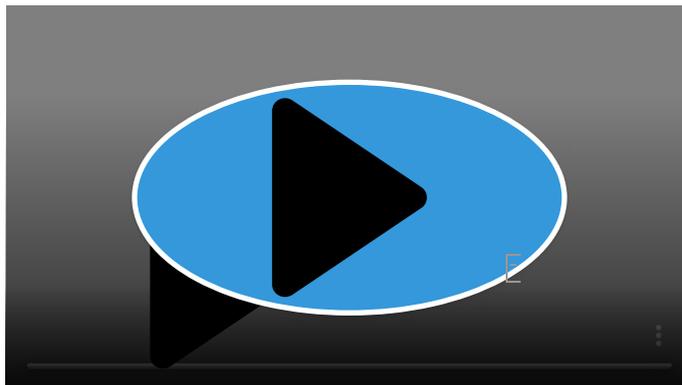
"While most people exposed to Legionella don't get sick, individuals ages 50 and above, especially those who smoke and have chronic lung conditions, are at a higher risk," Health Commissioner Dr. Mary T. Bassett said. "This disease is very treatable with antibiotics. I encourage anyone with symptoms of Legionnaires' disease to seek care early."

Legionnaires' disease is a type of pneumonia that is caused by the bacteria Legionella, which grows in warm water. Symptoms resemble other types of pneumonia and can include fever, chills, muscle aches, and cough. Most cases of Legionnaires' disease can be traced to plumbing systems where conditions are favorable for Legionella growth, such as cooling towers, whirlpool spas, hot tubs, humidifiers, hot water tanks, and evaporative condensers of large air-conditioning systems.

HEALTH & FITNESS

Legionnaires' cases rise to 16 in Washington Heights cluster

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Sandra Bookman has more on the rise in Legionnaires' cases.

8 sickened by Legionnaires' cluster in Washington Heights

POSTED 4:37 PM, JULY 11, 2018, BY [ALIZA CHASAN](#), UPDATED AT 10:44PM, JULY 11, 2018



WASHINGTON HEIGHTS, Manhattan — Eight cases of Legionnaires' disease have been reported in lower Washington Heights over the last week, health officials said Wednesday.

All but one has been hospitalized and one person has been discharged, officials said. No deaths have been reported.

“The Health Department has identified a cluster of Legionnaires disease in the Lower Washington Heights area,” Health Commissioner Dr. Mary T. Bassett said. “While most people exposed to Legionella don’t get sick, individuals ages 50 and above, especially those who smoke and have chronic lung conditions, are at a higher risk. This disease is very treatable with antibiotics. I encourage anyone with symptoms of Legionnaires’ disease to seek care early.”

The disease is spread by breathing in water vapor containing the legionella bacteria, health officials said.

Preliminary results of tests of water samples are expected sometime Thursday and final results are expected in two weeks. A team of health inspectors will be continuing their search of cooling towers to track the

source of the legionnaires cluster. To address the concerns of the community, health officials have scheduled a public meeting at 7 p.m. Thursday at St Luke's AME Church on Amsterdam Avenue.

WHAT IS LEGIONNAIRES' DISEASE?

Legionnaires' disease is a treatable infection using antibiotics for pneumonia. Every year, there are between 200 and 400 cases of Legionnaires' disease in the city.

Legionnaires' disease is caused by the bacteria Legionella.

Most cases of Legionnaires' disease can be traced to plumbing systems where conditions are favorable for Legionella growth, such as cooling towers, whirlpool spas, hot tubs, humidifiers, hot water tanks, and evaporative condensers of large air-conditioning systems.

Legionnaires' disease cannot be spread from person to person. Groups at highest risk for Legionnaires' disease include people who are middle-aged or older, especially cigarette smokers, people with chronic lung disease or weakened immune systems and people who take medicines that weaken their immune systems (immunosuppressive drugs). Those with symptoms should call their doctor and ask about testing for Legionnaires' disease.

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms include fever, cough, chills, muscle aches, headache, fatigue, loss of appetite, confusion and diarrhea. Symptoms usually appear two to 10 days after significant exposure to Legionella bacteria.

The Health Department is urging residents in the area with respiratory symptoms, such as fever, cough, chills and muscle aches, to promptly seek medical attention. The Health Department has alerted health care providers in the area about this cluster.

TREATMENT

Legionnaires' disease can be deadly, but is treatable with antibiotics. Most people get better with early treatment, although they may need to be hospitalized. Others have died from complications of the disease.