

# State health officials: 2 confirmed cases of Legionnaires' disease linked to Schaumburg hotel

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By Javonte Anderson

The Illinois Department of Public Health announced Friday that two confirmed cases of Legionnaires' disease have been linked to a hotel in Schaumburg.

In both cases, hotel visitors reported using water in their rooms, the hot tub and the pool while visiting AmericInn by Wyndham in July and August, according to a news release.

The IDPH and the Cook County Department of Public Health conducted an environmental investigation of the hotel on Thursday.

The AmericInn voluntarily closed its hot tub and pool during the investigation, and they will remain closed until the state and county health departments complete their investigation, officials said.

The AmericInn will send a notification to all guests who stayed at the hotel since June 13, instructing them to contact the county health department if they have been or are ill with respiratory symptoms, according to the release.

When reached by a Tribune reporter, the general manager of AmericInn would not disclose any specific details regarding the incident but said the hotel is cooperating with state and county officials.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Legionnaires' disease can cause a serious lung infection when people inhale small droplets of water containing the Legionella bacteria. It is rarely transmitted person to person.

The bacteria is found naturally in freshwater. But it can become a health hazard if it spreads through a building water system including showerheads, sink faucets, hot tubs that aren't properly drained, hot water tanks and large plumbing systems.

Symptoms such as high fever, chills, muscle aches, coughing and shortness of breath usually develop up to two weeks after exposure, IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike said.

People age 50 and older, and current or former smokers have an increased risk of getting sick after exposure to the bacteria, according to the CDC. People with chronic lung disease, weak immune systems, cancer and diabetes are also more susceptible.

In 2018, Illinois reported there were 510 cases of Legionnaires' disease reported statewide, officials said. So far this year, there have been 242 confirmed cases.

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Before coming to the Tribune, Javonte worked at The (Toledo) Blade, where he  covered K-12 and higher education. Previously, he was a general assignment reporter at the Post-Tribune in northwest Indiana. Javonte hails from Gary and is a proud Indiana

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