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I-Drive Area Hotel Shut Down After Legionnaires' Disease Outbreak

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ORANGE COUNTY, Fla. -- A local hotel in the busy I-Drive tourist area may be responsible for spreading a dangerous disease. At least two guests at the Quality Inn Suites on Canada Avenue ([see map](#)), near Universal, have been diagnosed with Legionnaires' disease and Friday the hotel was shut down.

 **LEGIONNAIRES' DISEASE:** [Details From Centers For Disease Control](#)
 **MAP SHOWING HOTEL:** [Link To Satellite Map Of Quality Inn](#)

The hotel has 154 rooms. Every one was booked and now every guest has to find another place to stay. The Health Department wants anyone who's been in the hotel for the last two weeks to watch for symptoms of Legionnaires' disease.

Hundreds of guests at the Quality Inn Suites near I-Drive packed up and moved out Friday after word that two recent guests were hospitalized with a potentially deadly disease.

"I'm mad that I have to leave," one tourist told Eyewitness News. "There was no explanation why, but we kind of overheard that it's some kind of bacteria."

The truth, according to the Health Department, is that the hotel may be the source of the Legionnaires' outbreak, so the hotel is voluntarily closing.

"Most cases of Legionnaires' disease are isolated, that is, there is only a single case. So whenever we see a clustering of cases together, that is, two occur in similar time and space, it makes us concerned from a public health standpoint," said Dr. Kevin Sherin, Orange County Health Department.

The hotel's pool was found to have inadequate chlorine levels, but the infection could have come from the air conditioning system and there is also the chance that it did not come from the hotel at all.

Two people were hospitalized as a result of the outbreak, Eyewitness News has learned, however no further information about their condition was available. They remain in a Pinellas County hospital. Pinellas County officials first alerted Orange County officials to the potential problem. The patients had stayed at the hotel within the last

two weeks.

"That is part of our investigation, is to elicit any type of possible exposure [besides the Quality Inn]. So, yes, those questions are being asked. Did they go into any restaurants, other hotels?" explained Dr. Donna Walsh, Orange County Health Department.

There are lots of test being done on water and air quality at the Quality Inn already and the results will take at least two weeks.

The situation is very delicate for health experts, because anytime an outbreak affects a hotel, the news can be crippling. The last local outbreak of Legionnaires' disease was in Daytona Beach Shores in 2006. Three guests at the Sea Garden Inn contracted the disease and one of them died. The hotel was closed and tested for Legionnaires', but all the tests came back clean and the hotel re-opened.

[Legionnaires' disease](#) is named after an outbreak of pneumonia that struck attendees of a convention of the American Legion in Philadelphia in July 1976.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, "Legionnaires' disease can have symptoms like many other forms of pneumonia, so it can be hard to diagnose at first. Signs of the disease can include: a high fever, chills, and a cough. Some people may also suffer from muscle aches and headaches. Chest X-rays are needed to find the pneumonia caused by the bacteria, and other tests can be done on sputum (phlegm), as well as blood or urine to find evidence of the bacteria in the body. These symptoms usually begin 2 to 14 days after being exposed to the bacteria. Legionnaires' disease can be very serious and can cause death in up to 5% to 30% of cases. Most cases can be treated successfully with antibiotics, and healthy people usually recover from infection."

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