

Legionnaires Outbreak in New York City Leads to 18 Sick and 1 Dead

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KATERYNA KON/SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY Legionnaires' disease

An outbreak of Legionnaires' disease in New York City's Bronx borough has left one dead and 18 sick, eight of whom are currently hospitalized, [the city's health department said](#) Wednesday.

The cases are clustered in the Bronx's Highbridge neighborhood, and officials have identified four water cooling towers in the area that were positive for Legionella pneumophila, the [bacteria that causes Legionnaires' disease](#). They are working to disinfect them now.

"We are saddened to hear about a death in a person who contracted Legionnaires'," said Health Commissioner Dr. Ashwin Vasan in a press release. "Health Department staff are working to ensure that buildings in the cluster area are treated and conditions remediated quickly."

[Legionnaires' disease](#) is a potentially deadly [type of pneumonia](#) that comes from the Legionella bacteria. The bacteria does not spread from person-to-person — rather, people contract Legionnaires from breathing in the bacteria, often from mist and the water dripping from air conditioning units.

RELATED: [4 People Now Dead from Legionnaires' Outbreak Linked to Hot Tub Display at a State Fair](#)

Signs of Legionnaires' disease include flu-like symptoms, cough, fever and difficulty breathing. The bacteria is easily treated with antibiotics if caught early, but if left too long it could become fatal.

"While most people exposed to the bacteria do not get sick, Legionnaires' disease can cause severe illness or be fatal for those at higher risk, including people pre-existing chronic health issues," Vasan said. "That's why it's crucial that you seek health care as soon as you experience flu-like symptoms."

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There are around 200 to 700 cases of Legionnaires' disease reported in New York City each year, [The New York Times reported](#), but clusters like this one are more infrequent. The last was in 2018, when an outbreak in Upper Manhattan sickened 18 and left one dead. The city's largest outbreak occurred in 2015, when 138 people in the Bronx developed the disease and 16 died.

NEW YORK, NY - AUGUST 13: A water cooling tower that was found to have traces of legionella pneumophila bacteria, which may have helped cause the recent outbreak of Legionnaires' disease in the Bronx, is seen on top of the United States Post Office at 558 Grand Concourse, on August 13, 2015 in the Bronx borough of New York City. In a press conference today New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio said that while new cases of Legionnaires' may appear, the outbreak has been contained and that the water cooling towers the New York City Department of Health believe are responsible for the outbreak have been decontaminated. (Photo by Andrew Burton/Getty Images) [More](#)

Andrew Burton/Getty A water cooling tower that was linked to the 2015 Legionnaires' disease outbreak

The city's health department said Wednesday that anyone experiencing flu-like symptoms or other signs of Legionnaires' should contact their physician "immediately."

<https://www.yahoo.com/lifestyle/legionnaires-outbreak-york-city-leads-211937243.html?guccounter=1>