

IDPH, Illinois EPA & Shelby County Health Department Investigating Cluster of Legionnaires' Cases in Findlay

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SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is working with the Shelby County Health Department and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) to investigate a cluster of three Legionnaires' disease cases. All three cases reside in Findlay, Illinois and reported illness onset dates between July 30 and August 4.

IDPH staff are working with Shelby County Health Department officials to determine common exposures between the three cases. Illinois local health departments investigating recent cases of Legionnaires' disease are being asked to inquire about any time spent in Findlay or Shelby County during the 14 days prior to onset of symptoms.

On August 11, Illinois EPA conducted testing and evaluation of the public water supply serving Findlay and found no concerns with chlorine levels, an effective disinfection for *Legionella*. Illinois EPA has also requested daily sampling for chlorine residual within the system. Based on available epidemiologic information, IDPH Environmental Health will be conducting environmental assessments focused on potential sources.

Environmental samples will be collected and tested by the IDPH public health laboratory. A definitive source of *Legionella* is rarely determined through environmental investigation. Rather, potential and possible sources of exposure are identified and investigated. *Legionella* control measures are then implemented to stop further exposure and disease.

“As the epidemiological and environmental investigation of this Legionnaires’ disease cluster continues, it is important to release this information to ensure that anyone with risk factors who has symptoms is aware and seeks evaluation and treatment,” **said IDPH Director Dr. Sameer Vohra.** “Legionnaires’ disease usually begins with a high fever (102 degrees F to 105 degrees F), chills, muscle aches, cough and shortness of breath, and symptoms usually develop up to two weeks after exposure.”

Legionnaires’ disease is a serious lung infection (pneumonia) that people can get by breathing in small droplets of water containing *Legionella* bacteria. In general, people do not spread Legionnaires’ disease and Pontiac fever to other people. Outbreaks are most commonly associated with buildings or structures that have complex water systems like hotels, hospitals, long-term care facilities, and cruise ships. The bacterium can become a health concern when it grows and spreads in human-made water systems, like hot tubs, cooling towers, hot water tanks, large plumbing systems, and decorative fountains.

Most healthy people do not get Legionnaires’ disease after being exposed to *Legionella* bacteria. People at increased risk of Legionnaire’s disease are those 50 years of age or older, or those who have certain risk factors such as being a current or former smoker, having a chronic disease, or having a weakened immune system.

In 2022, Illinois reported 381 cases of Legionnaires’ disease statewide with 215 confirmed to date in 2023.

Additional information about Legionnaires’ disease can be found on the [IDPH website](#) and the [CDC website](#).