



South Bronx Legionnaires' Disease Outbreak Frequently Asked Questions

If you live in the South Bronx and experience symptoms such as fever, cough, headache and muscle aches, seek medical attention right away.

What is the difference between a water tank and a cooling tower?

A *cooling tower* contains water and is used by some buildings as part of their air conditioning, ventilation and/or heating systems.

A *water tank* is a totally different system. Some taller buildings use a water tank to store water used for drinking, washing dishes and/or showering. No water tanks are associated with the current South Bronx outbreak.

Is the tap water in the South Bronx safe to drink and bathe with?

Yes. It is safe to drink and bathe with the tap water in the South Bronx and throughout the city.

Are air conditioning units safe to use?

Yes. It is safe to use home and car air conditioning units and to be in air conditioned environments.

Can I still eat and drink at South Bronx restaurants or buy food and drinks from South Bronx grocery stores?

Yes. The outbreak does not affect food or water sold in grocery stores or restaurants.

Are pools safe?

It is safe to swim in pools; they are not affected by the outbreak.

Are child care centers and schools safe?

It is safe to send children to school or child care. A cooling tower at Samuel Gompers High School tested positive for Legionella but has already been disinfected and does not pose a risk to students. No child care centers have tested positive for the bacteria. No children have been infected during this outbreak.

How many cooling towers were tested for Legionella? How many tested positive?

Testing is ongoing. The City is providing updates online regularly. Visit nyc.gov/health for the latest information.

If I live in, work in, or visited one of the buildings that tested positive for Legionella, do I need to worry about getting sick?

No. All of the buildings that tested positive have been disinfected and do not pose a risk. However, if you develop symptoms such as fever, cough, headache and muscle aches, seek medical attention right away.

What is the City doing about the outbreak?

The Health Department is actively investigating the outbreak and is testing water from cooling towers and other potential sources in the area to determine the source of the outbreak. All cooling towers found to have the bacteria have been disinfected.

The Department is also ordering all buildings with cooling towers in the zone of concern to disinfect their towers and put into place a long-term maintenance plan to keep their towers free of Legionella.

What does the Health Commissioner's August 6 order require building owners to do?

Those who own a building with a cooling tower in New York City must:

- Disinfect all of the building's cooling towers *within 14 days* of receiving the order in the mail.
- Keep records at the building or buildings of the inspection and disinfection of all cooling towers. If City officials ask for these records, the owner must show them.
- If the tower was already inspected and disinfected within the last 30 days, maintain records of the inspection and remediation, and make them available to the City upon request.

If a building owner was sent this order in error and does not have a cooling tower that recirculates water, he or she may ignore the order.

For a copy of the order, visit <http://on.nyc.gov/1KWdkir>.