



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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IDPH and Stickney Public Health District Report a Cluster of Legionnaires' Disease Cases in Burbank

CHICAGO – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), working with the Stickney Public Health District, is investigating a cluster of Legionnaires' disease cases in Burbank, Illinois, with onset dates between June and August. IDPH has advised hospitals and providers in the area to consider Legionnaires' disease in diagnosing patients with clinically compatible illnesses.

Illinois local health departments investigating cases of Legionnaires' disease were asked to inquire about any time spent in Burbank during the 14 days prior to onset of symptoms. Three cases were epidemiologically linked and one case was geographically linked to St. Albert the Great Church in Burbank. IDPH's Environmental Health staff inspected the church and collected samples. Laboratory tests detected the presence of *legionella* in the church's cooling tower.

The church is fully cooperating in remediating the cooling tower and notifying parishioners of the situation. The cooling tower will be shut down until *legionella* is no longer detected.

“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 feels 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. It is not transmitted person-to-person. 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.

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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 2021 Illinois reported 522 cases of Legionnaires' disease statewide with 227 confirmed to date in 2022

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

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