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# **Your Guide to Water Hygiene & Legionella**



People • Homes • Communities

# Risk of Legionnaires' disease

- ✓ Legionnaires' disease is a form of Pneumonia.
- ✓ Anybody can catch it, but it is more likely to affect those who are susceptible because of age, illness, (low immunity) or smoking etc.
- ✓ Most cases have been found in people aged between 40 and 70.
- ✓ There is no evidence to show the disease is contagious and only 200-400 cases of Legionnaires' disease are reported in the UK each year.
- ✓ Legionnaires' disease does not appear to multiply below 20°C and will not survive above 60°C.
- ✓ The area of concern is stagnant water stored between 20°C and 40°C

## How do people get it?

- ✓ People catch Legionnaires' disease by inhaling small droplets of water suspended in the air, which contain the bacteria.
- ✓ You cannot get Legionnaires' disease from drinking water.
- ✓ The bacteria have to be in very small droplets like spray from a shower or spray taps.
- ✓ In domestic properties the risk of Legionnaires' disease is rated as low risk



Legionella can be found in most water systems. Below shows how the bacteria can form and grow, and what you can do to make sure it remains at an acceptable level.

## **Precautions you can take and ways to prevent it.**

### **Bacteria breeds in stagnant water and lime scale**

- If taps in a property are not used for one week or more, each tap should be run or flushed.
- If your property is empty for long periods of time i.e. over two weeks. This may be due to long hospital admissions, extended holiday periods or any other reason then the hot and cold taps and shower should be flushed and cleaned.
- Shower heads should be flushed out on a regular basis.
- Ensure any taps which are not normally used are flushed regularly (i.e. outside toilets and taps)
- Keep tap and shower heads free from lime scale where possible, if not flush or use the outlets regularly

## **The Health & Safety Executive**

The Health & Safety Executive provides practical advice and guidance to control the risks from exposure to Legionella in manmade water systems. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/legionnaires>

# Caredig

43 Walter Road, Swansea, SA1 5PN

Tel: 01792 460192

Email: [info@caredig.co.uk](mailto:info@caredig.co.uk)

[www.caredig.co.uk](http://www.caredig.co.uk)

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