

How to stay safe at home: Water safety guide

What is legionella?

Legionella bacteria is commonly found in many water sources. Hot and cold water systems in homes can be a potential source.

Legionella bacteria can cause a form of pneumonia called Legionnaires' disease, caused by the inhalation of small droplets of contaminated water. The bacteria doesn't spread in drinking water or person to person, and not everyone who comes into contact with the bacteria will become ill.

Symptoms of Legionnaires' are similar to flu symptoms and include high temperature, fever and chills, cough, muscle pains and headache. If you're worried you might have Legionnaires' disease, you should contact your GP as soon as possible. If your doctor diagnoses Legionnaires' disease, please call us on **0141 889 7105** to let us know immediately so we can check and, if necessary, treat your water system.

What can I do to reduce the risk of legionella in my home?

To reduce the risk, it's really important that:

- Hot water in the system remains hot
- The water in the system is circulated regularly

To help with this, there are a few simple steps you can take

1. Your boiler or hot water system is set to heat water to 60c. Please don't change this setting, as lower temperatures can provide better conditions for the bacteria to live and multiply. Beware of scalding at this temperature though, particularly if there are children in your home. And if you think your hot water isn't heating up correctly, please report a repair:
<https://www.paisleyha.org.uk/report-a-repair/>
2. Use all your taps at least once a week - if you have taps which are used infrequently, it's important to let them run regularly to keep the water circulating in the system
3. Keep shower heads, hoses and taps clean and free from limescale and mould by descaling them every three months
4. If your property has been empty for a while, you should flush the whole water system on your return - keep out of the way while this is being done to avoid any droplets:
Run all your taps for at least five minutes
Flush the toilet with the lid down
Run the shower for at least five minutes, using both hot and cold water
5. Please see in link for further advice on how to flush your system:
<https://www.waterhygienecentre.com/academy/little-used-water-outlets>