

Legionella – How to Keep your Water Safe

What is Legionnaires Disease?

Legionella is the name given to a type of bacteria that is sometimes found in water in the UK. It is usually found in streams and rivers but sometimes it can end up in the water in your home.

Legionnaire's disease is the name given to the illness which people can get when they come in to contact with the legionella bacteria.

Is it Harmful?

Small amounts of it are not harmful. It is only dangerous if the bacteria are allowed to grow. If it grows and you breathe in the water droplets containing the bacteria then it can make you very ill.

Legionella grows best in water that is not too cold or not too hot. It can also grow when the water in your pipes and taps is left stagnant (this means if you have not used your taps or shower in a while).

Are there any risks to me?

The risk of Legionella in most occupied homes is typically very low as:

- Daily water usage by the occupier is sufficient to turnover the entire water system, which significantly reduces any chance of water stagnation.
- The vast majority of our properties have their cold water supplied directly from the mains to their cold taps (requiring no stored water tanks)
- The majority of our properties have their hot water fed from an instantaneous heater (e.g. combi boiler), with the water supplied directly from the mains.
- Before any properties are allocated, as part of the Council's void repairs process it conducts a range of checks to ensure the risk of Legionella is fully minimised.

What can I do to further help keep my water safe?

You can (and should) routinely take a range of steps to help keep your water supplies within your home safe. These are as follows:

- **Clean your taps and shower regularly as the bacteria can grow on rust and dirt.**
- **Shower heads should be disinfected and cleaned at least once every three months.**
- **If you have not been at home for seven or more days, then when you get back you should run all taps and shower for a few minutes before drinking any water. This will make sure you get fresh and clean water in your pipes.**
- **Do not adjust the temperature settings on your hot water storage tank (if you have one)**
- **Contact the Council repairs line promptly if your hot water is not heating properly, or there are any other problems with the system**