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**PREVENT
LEGIONNAIRES'
DISEASE
(LEGIONELLA)
IN YOUR HOME**

**Safe Living is something
we work on together.**

**We believe in the importance of a safe home. That is why
Servatius takes careful measures to prevent legionella.
We ask you also to be careful.**

What is legionella?

Legionella is a bacterium in groundwater and tap water that can make you sick. It usually forms in such small numbers that the bacteria are not a danger. The legionella bacterium is particularly dangerous if it has the opportunity to multiply and gathers in small droplets of water (mist) in the air that we breathe.

How can I get infected?

It is estimated that hundreds and possibly thousands of people are infected with legionella bacteria every year. Most people don't notice anything. Legionella is a lung infection that is caught by inhaling the bacteria that live in very small droplets of air-borne water (mist), such as in the shower. The disease cannot be transmitted from person to person and is therefore not contagious.

**'Drinking
contaminated
water is not
dangerous.'**



What are the symptoms of a legionella infection?

Only a small proportion of infected people become ill. People with poor resistance (the elderly, heavy drinkers and smokers, chronically ill people, and infants) are at greater risk of falling ill. The disease appears in a mild and more serious form.

1) The mild form: legionella influenza

People experience mild, flu-like symptoms such as fever, headache, muscle aches, and a cough for two to five days. The disease is not dangerous in its mild form. The symptoms will go away on their own and without treatment.

2) The serious form: pneumonia

The time between the infection and the occurrence of the first symptoms varies from two to nineteen days. The disease starts with a rapidly emerging headache, muscle aches, and a feeling of sickness, followed by pneumonia with a fever above 39° C. The patient coughs and is sometimes short of breath. Some patients suffer from vomiting and diarrhoea. The disease can have very serious consequences and can even be life-threatening. The disease can be treated successfully with prompt administration of the right antibiotics. However, it can take a long while before the patient completely recovers.

Prevention is better than cure!

Of course, it is always better to prevent yourself from contracting the disease. Like a carton of milk from the supermarket, water in the drinking water installation has a limited shelf life. Stagnant water, the presence of rust, lime, or a layer of slime (biofilm) in the water system encourages the risk of growth of legionella bacteria, especially at a temperature between 25 and 45° C.

What can you do by yourself?

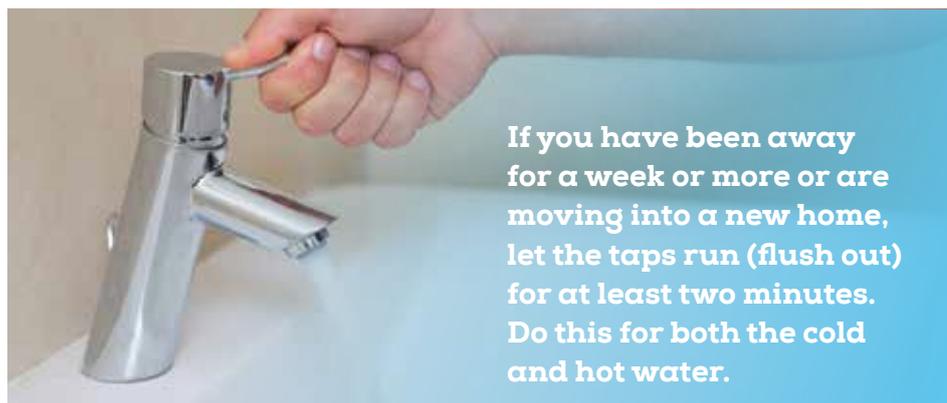
- If you have been away for a week or more or are moving into a new home, let the taps run (flush out) for at least two minutes. Do this for both the cold and hot water. To prevent mist formation, place the shower head in a bucket of water.
- Use each tap in your home at least once a week.
- If you are staying away for a longer period due to a holiday or hospitalization, ask family, neighbours, or acquaintances to flush out all the taps in your home once a week.
- Clean the shower head and the tap outlet regularly (removing scale).
- Hang the empty garden hose on a wall away from the sun. If the garden hose has not been used for a long time, allow the garden hose to flow gently from the tap for approximately five minutes. If you collect the water in a watering can, you can safely use it for the plants.

- Never leave water in a plant sprayer. Empty it before putting it away after use.
- If you have a combi central heating system, periodically check whether the temperature of the hot water is and remains at least above 55° C degrees. If in doubt, call the maintenance company. The telephone number is on the sticker on your boiler, water heater, or hot water tank.

More information

For more information, you can contact our partner, Aqua Assistance, on 0492-66 00 00 or visit www.Rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/legionella

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