

Important Health Notice

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Page 1 of 1

Information for Healthcare Professionals Legionella Outbreak in Toronto Nursing Home

Dear Colleagues:

The following is being provided to update you on the outbreak at a Toronto nursing home:

- Laboratory tests have confirmed Legionella as a causative agent of the outbreak. Legionellosis is a respiratory infection causing pneumonia, presenting 2-10 days after exposure.
- Currently 70 of 249 residents, 18 of 290 staff and 9 visitors are included in the outbreak; 42 people are being treated in hospital. There have been seventeen deaths among residents. Some patients are improving and are now afebrile, and some have been discharged.
- Legionella bacteria are found naturally in the environment, usually in water. The bacteria grow best in warm water, like hot tubs, hot water tanks or parts of the air-conditioning systems of large buildings.
- People get Legionnaires disease when they inhale contaminated aerosols from devices such as cooling towers, showers, and faucets, or aspirate contaminated water.
- Legionellosis does not spread from person to person. Routine precaution should be followed.
- Routine precautions are for ALL patients when care is given and include:
 - Hand hygiene
 - Glove use when contact with any moist body substances, mucous membranes or non-intact skin is anticipated
 - Gowns are recommended during routine patient care activities in which splashing and soiling with body substances is likely to occur

Highlights:

- **Legionella bacterium is confirmed causing the respiratory outbreak at Seven Oaks Home for the Aged**
- **Legionellosis does not spread from person to person, it is caused by environmental contamination**
- **Routine precautions should be followed when providing care for patients/residents**

- Mask and eye protection are recommended for activities that are likely to generate splashes or sprays of blood, body fluids, secretions or excretions.
- There is no restriction on patient transfer or staff working at multiple facilities.

Residents and staff of the facility will be offered preventive antibiotic treatment.

A thorough environmental investigation is underway to reveal the source of the contamination at the home.

Please contact your local public health unit should you have any questions regarding legionellosis.

(original signed by)

Dr Sheela Basrur, Chief Medical Officer of Health and Assistant Deputy Minister

(original signed by)

Allison J. Stuart
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