



To:	General Practices, Pharmacists, After-Hours Centres and Emergency Departments in the greater Wellington and Wairarapa regions
From:	Dr Craig Thornley, Medical Officer of Health
Date:	25 November 2015
Title:	Public Health Alert: Legionellosis outbreak, Pahiatua

Please distribute the following information to relevant staff in your organisation.

If you would like to receive this by email please advise RPH of your email on rph@huttvalleydhb.org.nz.

All public health alerts are available at www.rph.org.nz (health professionals – public health alerts)

LEGIONELLOSIS OUTBREAK, PAHIATUA

Current situation

As has been reported in the media, there has been an outbreak of legionellosis among workers at the Fonterra Pahiatua milk-processing plant. Three workers at the plant have been confirmed with legionellosis since early October. Legionella contamination of cooling towers on the site has been confirmed, and has now been treated. The outbreak response is being managed by MidCentral DHB Public Health Service.

Clinical presentation

Legionellosis can commence with loss of appetite, influenza-like symptoms, fever, muscle aches and headache; dry cough, abdominal pain and diarrhoea can also develop. The illness ranges from a short-lived respiratory illness (Pontiac fever), to pneumonia (Legionnaires' disease) which can be severe. The incubation period for Legionnaires' disease is usually 2-10 days, up to 14 days.

Be alert for possible cases

Workers and contractors who have been on-site at the Fonterra Pahiatua plant between August and November have been advised of possible exposure to Legionella bacteria, and to seek medical attention if currently unwell or if an illness suggestive of legionellosis occurred between August and November. We ask that you have a high index of suspicion for legionellosis among those who have been on-site at Fonterra Pahiatua; recommendations for testing are on the next page.

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He ture no nga korero katoa kei roto o tenei karere, no reira, kia tupato. Mehemea kaore matau kua e mau. Me whakamohiotia atu ki to Tari, me te mea nana I tonu mai. E Tika Hoki.



If you suspect a case of legionellosis please:

- **Notify** suspected cases of legionellosis during office hours to the RPH notifications line on 04 570 9267, or after hours to the on-call medical officer of health on 04 570 9007;
- **Obtain** sputum for culture if possible
- **Request** urine testing for *Legionella pneumophila* serogroup 1 antigen if within one week of acute illness
- **Request** acute and convalescent blood specimens for legionella serology if within one month of acute illness; the convalescent specimen must be collected at least 3 weeks after the acute specimen
- **Request** a single convalescent specimen for legionella serology if more than one month since acute illness.
 - **request** acute and convalescent blood specimens for legionella serology; convalescent specimens are collected 3-6 weeks following acute specimen
- **Copy** all laboratory tests for legionellosis to “Medical Officer of Health” at Regional Public Health
- **Manage** as for the clinical presentation, for example as community-acquired pneumonia.

A fact sheet is available on the Regional Public Health website:

www.rph.org.nz > Resources > Health Information > Legionellosis