

Information for patients on ward 9 West

22 December 2022

Legionella bacteria was found in a drinking water tap on ward 9 West, where you recently stayed. This was found through our usual routine testing and the tap has now been disinfected.

The exposure period from this tap was 1-19 December 2022. We believe it is possible that you were exposed during this time, and are very sorry for the inconvenience and stress this may cause.

Drinking water that contains legionella doesn't make you sick, but it is possible to get sick if you breathe in fine droplets that contain the bacteria. This can happen if you choke or cough while drinking. You cannot catch it from another person.

While the risk of getting sick from this is **very low**, we are letting you know so that you can monitor for symptoms.

As a precaution, we encourage you to look out for the following symptoms, which may occur up to two weeks after exposure:

- fever
- severe headache
- muscles aches and pains
- diarrhoea
- cough and
- shortness of breath.

If you develop or have already developed any of these symptoms within two weeks of being discharged from the ward, please see your doctor and show them this information.

If you are currently feeling well and if more than two weeks have passed since you were discharged, you do not need to keep monitoring for symptoms.

If you are unable to contact your doctor and need advice, you can contact the Austin Health switchboard on [03 9496 5000](tel:0394965000).

Facts about Legionella

- Legionella bacteria are often found in natural environments, particularly in water and garden areas.
- Legionella can also grow in water systems used in public buildings.

- Legionella bacteria can be acquired by inhaling contaminated droplets of water.
- Legionella can't spread from person to person.
- Inhalation of Legionella bacteria may lead to a type of pneumonia (Legionnaires' Disease), an infection in the lungs.
- You can't spread pneumonia. If you get sick, you won't make other people sick.
- Symptoms generally develop within two weeks from the time of exposure.
- Symptoms of Legionella pneumonia include fever, severe headache, muscles aches and pains, diarrhoea, cough and shortness of breath.
- If tested and diagnosed, Legionella pneumonia can be treated with antibiotics.

For more information about Legionella, please visit the [Better Health Channel](#).