



# Preventing Legionellosis at Home



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES**  
Division of Public Health



Legionellosis is caused by a type of bacteria called *Legionella*. It can cause two related illnesses:

- **Legionnaires' disease:** a severe form of pneumonia (lung infection)
- **Pontiac fever:** a milder infection **without** pneumonia

Most healthy people exposed to *Legionella* don't get sick. People **most** at risk include:

- People 50 years and older
- People who smoke or previously smoked
- People with chronic disease
- People with compromised immune systems

## Common Sources of Infection at Home include:



Home and car air-conditioning units do not use water to cool the air, so they are not a risk for *Legionella* growth. This includes window units too.

## Best Prevention Practices at Home:

- Flush faucets and showerheads that have not been used for 3+ days.
- Maintain and disinfect hot tubs properly.
- Use distilled water to rinse your sinuses.
- Use recommended water for in-home medical equipment. Examples: CPAP and BIPAP machines, humidifiers, vaporizers, etc.
- Clean medical equipment parts and accessories as recommended by manufacturer.
- Follow instructions for cleaning and replacing all water filters.
- Drain garden hoses to avoid stagnant water.
- Use proper windshield wiper fluid. *Legionella* can grow in the windshield wiper fluid tank if tap water is added.
- Avoid fountains and misters if you are high-risk.

Own a vacation rental home?  
Learn [how to prevent Legionella's spread](#) in your home.

Use the QR code to learn more about Legionellosis.

