

A blue circular logo containing the word "TAPF" in a bold, teal, sans-serif font.

TAPF



# Legionella

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A guide for tenants

## **What is legionella?**

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Legionella is a type of bacteria found naturally in freshwater environments, like lakes and streams. It can become a health concern when it grows and spreads in human-made water systems like showerheads, taps, hot water tanks and heaters. People can contract Legionnaires disease, which is a form of pneumonia, when they breathe in small droplets of water in the air that contain the Legionella bacteria. It can make you very ill. Symptoms are similar to the flu and the illness is treated with antibiotics.

## **Am I at risk of catching legionnaires disease?**

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Thankfully, catching Legionnaires disease in your home is rare. Most incidents of the disease are caught from faulty air conditioning systems or cooling towers. It is also not infectious so it can't be passed from person to person. However, there is a possibility that when certain conditions exist in the home it increases your risk. Water that is between 20 - 45°C (lukewarm to hot) is a suitable breeding ground for bacteria to grow. This can happen in large water tanks in lofts that are not used much, or pipes that go to a tap that is hardly ever turned on.

## **What are Taff doing ?**

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We employ a water hygiene company to assess certain communal water systems. Where necessary, and in line with legal obligations, we'll regularly monitor and inspect certain buildings to make sure water systems are clean and the water is safe to use. We do not monitor water hygiene within your home, so please follow the advice in this leaflet.

## **What can I do to minimise risk?**

The likelihood of Legionella being in your home is very low as most households do not store huge amounts of water and water is used regularly so it's not standing still in pipes. However, here are some tips to make sure the water in your home is safe.

- When turning taps on, turn them on slowly so that you don't splash water, as this might release water droplets into the air.

When flushing showers, remove the shower head and lower the hose into the bath. If you're unable to remove the head, wrap it in a towel or facecloth to make sure there is no spray that you could inhale.

- Legionella can grow and multiply on grime, scale, algae and rust. Make sure you clean and descale all your taps and showerhead every three months or when there is an obvious build up by using a nylon brush or diluted bleach.

## **What do I do if I think I have Legionnaires disease?**

Contact your doctor in the first instance.

Let us know so we can put in place the appropriate safety measures.

To find out more information about Legionella, please go to the Health and Safety Executive website at [www.hse.gov.uk/legionnaires](http://www.hse.gov.uk/legionnaires) or contact us using the details below:

[www.taffhousing.co.uk](http://www.taffhousing.co.uk)

@taffhousing

This Legionella leaflet is available in large print and in community languages please visit our website to request this.



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at the centre of  
everything we do.**

**TAFF**

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