

## Staff Huddle: What is Legionella? - Week #1

- Legionella bacteria can cause Legionnaires' disease and Pontiac fever, known as legionellosis<sup>1</sup>.
- Legionella can make people sick when the bacteria grow in water.
- Legionella spreads in droplets small enough for people to breathe in.
- The bacteria grow best in warm water that is not moving or that does not have enough disinfectant to kill the bacteria.



## Staff Huddle: Where does legionella like to grow? - Week #2

- Showers and faucets
  - Legionella can grow in and spread through showerheads if a building's water has low disinfectant levels.
- Cooling towers, which are parts of large, centralized air conditioning systems.
  - When disinfectant levels are low, cooling tower fans can spray dirty water droplets into the air for people to breathe in.
- Hot tubs
  - The warm temperature supports growth of Legionella, which can spread through water jets.
- Decorative fountains and water features
  - The warm areas of a fountain and splashing can spread this contaminated water.
- Hot water tanks and heaters
- Large, complex plumbing systems



## Staff Huddle: How can we prevent Legionella growth as healthcare workers? - Week #3

- Environmental, engineering, and maintenance workers will perform most of these actions, but all healthcare workers should be aware.
- Keep hot water temperatures within range of facility policy and a correct temperature log.
- Make sure disinfectant levels are monitored per facility policy.
- Keep water flowing (preventing stagnation).
  - Operate and maintain equipment to prevent slime (biofilm), organic debris, and corrosion.
  - Monitor factors external to buildings, such as construction, water main breaks, and changes in municipal water quality.
  - Avoid placing decorative fountains and fish tanks in patient-care areas. If used, ensure scheduled, proper disinfection. (1)
  - Be conscious of rooms or units that are closed for long periods of time (i.e., weeks or months).



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## Staff Huddle: Legionella Prevention for Facilities. - Week #4

- The key to preventing Legionnaires' disease is maintenance of the water systems in which Legionella may grow. If Legionella is found in a healthcare facility's water system, the facility should work to eliminate the bacteria. This will be handled by maintenance and engineering services but refer to your manager to determine who will perform these duties in your facility.
- Water management programs should be developed by facilities and properly managed.
- More information on water management systems can be found at:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/legionella/wmp/control-toolkit/index.html>

