

## Legionella

Legionella is a bacterium that naturally exists in low numbers in all water supplied to homes and causes Legionellosis. The disease is a kind of pneumonia that could be fatal. It can affect anybody, but mainly affects people who are vulnerable due to age, illness, a lowered immune system or smoking.

It can live in water systems storage tanks, pipe work, taps and showers. The risk of legionella is very low, but you can take steps to avoid it.

The risk is greater if your home is left unoccupied for example after returning from a long break (more than one week).

## How to reduce the risk:

- Ensure that cold water is stored at below 20°C, and hot water is above 50°C at the outlets.
- Keep water cisterns covered, insulated and clean from debris.
- Ensure that pipe work is insulated.
- When you return from a long break, run your shower (where fitted) and all taps continuously for 5 minutes (this flushes out any bacteria). To minimise the risk of creating a fine spray carrying legionella in the air, showers should only be discharged carefully into the drain.
- Shower heads should be cleaned at least every 3 months.
- Report any defects of the system to us without delay.

## Hot water

Scalding accidents involving overheating hot water are thankfully very rare.

We ensure that all immersion heaters and hot water storage tanks are fitted with a safety cut out feature.

## To reduce risk:

- Always mix hot and cold water when running a bath and run the cold tap first.
- Look for signs that the thermostat may be malfunctioning, this could include:

1. Excessively hot water coming out of the hot tap.
  2. Excessive noise or 'bubbling' from the water cylinder.
  3. Hot water coming from any of the cold taps.
  4. Steam or moisture in the roof space where the storage tank is located.
- Never use water from a water butt in a plant sprayer or any appliance which creates a mist.
  - Contact us immediately, if you think that your thermostat is over heating.

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