

Legionellosis

Legionellosis is an acute bacterial infection caused by *Legionella* bacteria, mainly *L. pneumophila*. Signs of the disease can include: a high fever, chills, and a cough. Symptoms are similar to other forms of pneumonia, so it can be hard to diagnose. Some people may also suffer from myalgias and headaches. Chest X-rays are needed to diagnose pneumonia, with follow-up tests on sputum (phlegm), as well as blood or urine to find evidence of *Legionella*.

These symptoms usually begin 2 to 14 days after exposure.

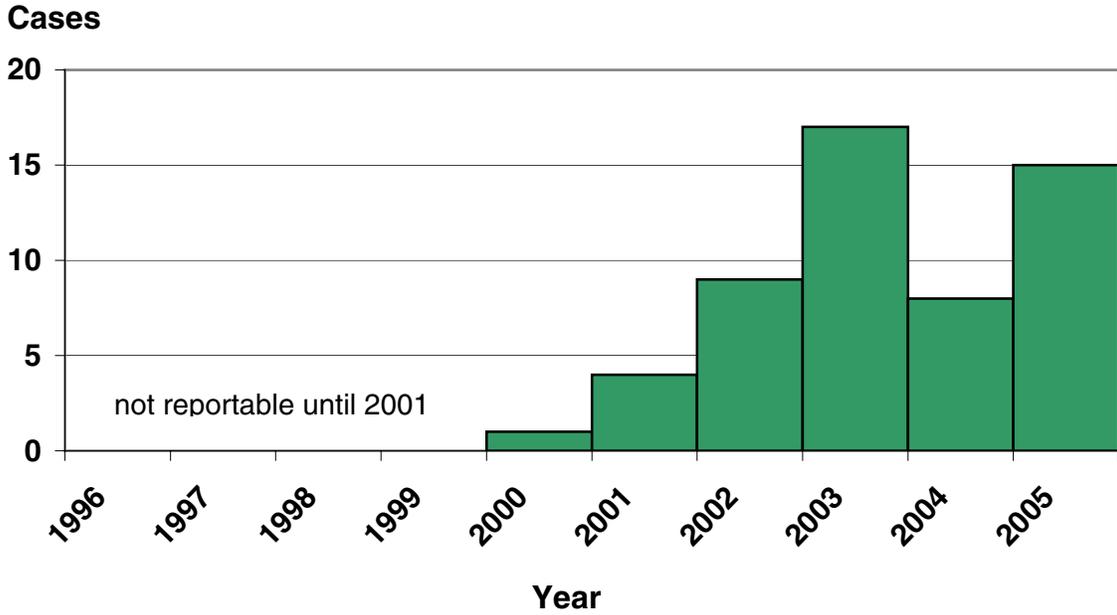
Pontiac Fever, a milder illness associated with *Legionella* bacteria characterized by fever and myalgias without pneumonia typically occurs within a few hours to two days after exposure. Symptoms go away on their own without treatment and without causing further problems.

The *Legionella* bacteria are found naturally in the environment, usually in water. The bacteria grow best in warm water, like the kind found in hot tubs, cooling towers, hot water tanks, large plumbing systems, or parts of the air-conditioning systems of large buildings. Person-to-person transmission does not occur.

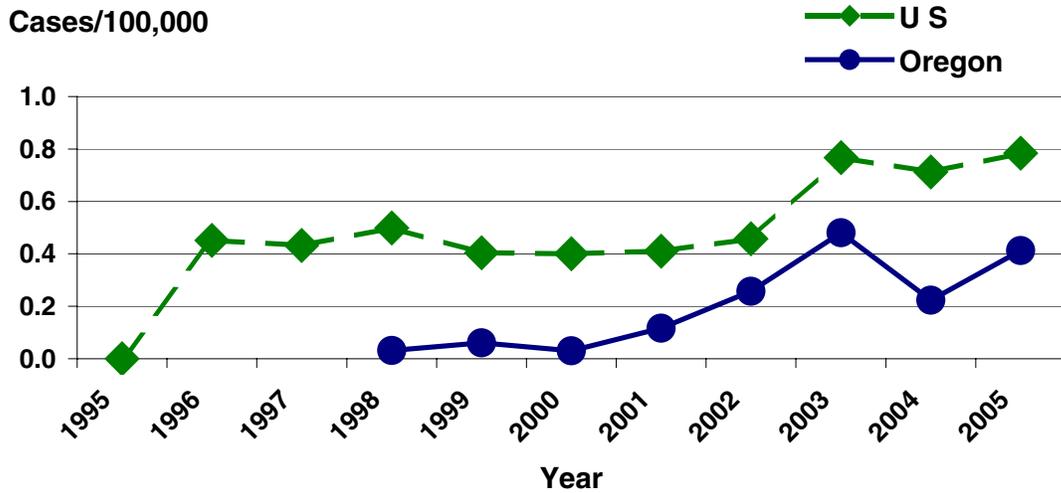
Risks for infection include older age, smoking, chronic lung disease (like emphysema), renal insufficiency, diabetes and immune deficiency. Death occurs in 10%-15% of cases: a substantially higher proportion of fatal cases occur during nosocomial outbreaks. Pontiac fever is a self-limited disease that requires no treatment.

In 2005, 15 cases of legionellosis were reported in Oregon. All were hospitalized and there was one death.

Legionellosis by Year Oregon, 1996-2005



Incidence of Legionellosis Oregon vs. Nationwide 1995-2005



Incidence of Legionellosis by County of Residence Oregon, 2005

