

# Legionnaire's Disease Shuts Down Orlando Hotel



The Orange County, Fla. Quality Inn closing after an outbreak of Legionnaires' disease.

Posted: 4:21 pm EDT March 14, 2008 Updated: 4:31 pm EDT March 14, 2008

**ORLANDO, Fla.** -- An Orange County, Florida hotel will close voluntarily after an outbreak of Legionnaires' disease, WSB-TV Channel 2 learned Friday.

The Orange County Health Department says two laboratory-confirmed cases of Legionnaires' disease are linked to the Quality Inn near Universal Studios. The hotel is in the International Drive tourist corridor, popular with tourists visiting nearby theme parks.

Officials believe the outbreak may have started in the hotel's hot tub, which may not have been properly chlorinated.

The Health Department investigation began Thursday. The hotel was sampled for water contamination. It will take two weeks to get results back. Indoor air quality will also be tested.

At least two people were hospitalized as a result of the outbreak, Action News has learned, however no further information about their condition was available. They remain in a Pinellas County hospital. Pinellas County officials first alerted Orange County officials to the potential problem. The patients had stayed at the hotel within the last two weeks.

The situation is very delicate for health experts, because anytime an outbreak affects a hotel, the news can be crippling. Local and state health officials met late Friday morning to consult with experts from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

Legionnaires' disease is named after an outbreak of pneumonia that struck attendees of a convention of the American Legion in Philadelphia in July 1976.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, "Legionnaires' disease can have symptoms like many other forms of pneumonia, so it can be hard to diagnose at first. Signs of the disease can include: a high fever, chills, and a cough. Some people may also suffer from muscle aches and headaches. Chest X-rays are needed to find the pneumonia caused by the bacteria, and other tests can be done on sputum (phlegm), as well as blood or urine to find evidence of the bacteria in the body. These symptoms usually begin 2 to 14 days after being exposed to the bacteria. Legionnaires' disease can be very serious and can cause death in up to 5 percent to 30 percent of cases. Most cases can be treated successfully with antibiotics, and healthy people usually recover from infection."