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St. Joseph Hospital Legionnaires Disease

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Patients and employees at Towson's St. Joseph Medical Center have been warned not to use the hospital's water supply after the presence of Legionnaires' disease-causing bacteria was found in the hot water supply.

Although hospital officials have indicated that the type of bacteria found in the water supply, *Legionella pneumophila*, is less likely than other strains to make someone sick, precautions are being taken to reduce the risk of a Legionnaires disease outbreak.

According to the [Baltimore Sun](#), St. Joseph Hospital patients and employees have been told not to take showers or tub baths, drink tap water or out of fountains and to use waterless soap or sanitizers to wash their hands instead of water. Employees are also using saline or sterile water to flush tubes and rinse equipment.

In January 2009, [Maryland General Hospital in Baltimore discovered low levels of Legionella bacteria](#) in a shower area during routine testing of the hospital's water supply, which was the second time in the last two years that the bacteria has been found at the Maryland hospital.

A similar issue occurred earlier this year at [Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia](#), where four patients developed Legionnaires' disease since January 1, 2009. Last week, the hospital reopened the affected areas after installing a new system that injects chlorine gas into water at the point of entry into the hospital, thus killing bacteria and other contaminants. In addition, about 1,300 filters are being used throughout the hospital on shower heads and water faucets to screen out Legionella bacteria.

[Legionnaire's disease](#) is contracted when infected water gets into the air and is inhaled by an individual. It is a potentially deadly form of pneumonia and the bacteria causing it thrive in warm, moist environments.

The greatest risk of the bacteria is to people with compromised immune systems. The common symptoms are chills, fever, and a dry cough. Muscle aches, headache, loss of appetite, and occasionally vomiting and diarrhea, may also occur. It is often difficult to distinguish other types of pneumonia from Legionnaires' disease.

If you, a friend or family member have developed Legionnaire's disease after receiving treatment at St. Joseph's Hospital or Maryland General Hospital, request a free consultation with our [Maryland injury lawyers](#).