

Water Safety

Legionella (Legionnaires' Disease)

Legionella is a bacterium that may be found in very amounts in almost any water supply. There is no risk if you swallow this bacterium, but if conditions are right for the bacterium to multiply then you inhale water spray from showers for example you may inhale the bacteria, in such cases you may contract Legionnaires' Disease especially if you suffer some form of respiratory vulnerability or smoke.

Legionnaires' Disease is a kind of pneumonia affecting the lungs and is so named because when it was first discovered in 1976, the first 200 victims were war veterans attending an American Legion convention in Pennsylvania.

Hanover already takes numerous actions to minimise this risk to residents by regular chlorination and cleaning water tanks and cisterns and checking the purity of our water supply. Here are a couple of precautions you can undertake to protect yourself from Legionnaires' Disease.

If you are away on holiday or otherwise leaving your home empty for more than a week, you should run all your taps (hot and cold) as shown below as soon as you return. This will get rid off any bacterium that may have accumulated in your pipes during your absence.

WHAT	HOW	
Flushing WC	Flush the WC with the toilet lid down, to reduce the level of spray produced.	
Flushing an outlet (e.g. a tap)	Run all outlets, especially showers, for 5 minutes; turn on taps slowly to avoid splashing and place a bag over shower heads to prevent spray.	

Regularly (about once a month) remove your shower-head, clean and soak in cold water with chlorine tablets or in a mild solution of bleach. This will kill off any legionella bacterium.

WHAT	HOW	
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<p>Cleaning shower heads</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear rubber gloves for this. • Remove showerhead by unscrewing from shower hose. Descale as necessary by scrubbing scale off head with brush or by using a proprietary descaling product. • Disinfect by soaking in specialist shower cleaner or bleach mixed with hot water. • Leave for length of time directed on bottle. Rinse in clean water safe for people to touch with bare hands. • Reinstall showerhead. 	  
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