

Please read this  
important information

# Legionella: your fact sheet

‘Legionella’ is the name given to a group of bacteria that is found in almost all water sources including rivers and lakes. It can also be found in soil, compost and mains water and can potentially thrive in domestic water systems.

## Is Legionella harmful?

Legionella can be harmful if the conditions are right for the bacteria to multiply and if you inhale water droplets from a contaminated water system. Generally legionella bacteria exists naturally in low numbers in all water supplied to the home. With normal regular use this causes no problems. The risk occurs where bacteria can increase and multiply to dangerous levels.

Main risk areas in the home are shower heads, taps and even washing machine or dishwasher pipes. Legionella bacteria is more likely to grow between 20°C and 45°C and where there is sludge, scale and rust for the bacteria to feed on.

## What can I do?

- Ensure all taps and showers are used at least once a week. If they are not used regularly or if you have been on holiday run all your taps for a few minutes before using the water. You’ll also need to run the water in your shower. Make sure the water doesn’t spray or splash too much as this can create water droplets.
- Keep taps and shower heads clean and free from lime scale, mould or algae growth. Brush the scale off with a nylon brush and wipe with a diluted bleach solution. You can also buy de-scaling solution from hardware shops.
- Keep hot water on your boiler or hot water cylinders set to 60°C or greater. Just beware of scalding!
- Report any rust or unusual deposits flowing from water outlets to us by phoning 01395 517458 or emailing [repairs@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:repairs@eastdevon.gov.uk).

## Further Information

The Health and Safety Executive is the government body responsible for water hygiene and legionnaires disease. Further advice can be found at [hse.gov.uk/legionnaires](http://hse.gov.uk/legionnaires).