**Legionellosis**

**Definition:**

Legionellosis or Legionnaires’ disease is caused by the *Legionella* bacterium. *Legionella* bacteria are found naturally in the environment, usually in water. The bacteria grow best in warm water.

**Signs and symptoms:**

Symptoms of legionellosis are similar to other forms of pneumonia, so it can be difficult to diagnose without testing. Signs include: cough, shortness of breath, high fever, muscle aches, and headaches. Symptoms usually begin 2-10 days after being exposed to the bacteria.

**Transmission:**

People get legionellosis when they breathe in a mist or vapor containing the bacteria. The bacteria are not spread from person to person.

**Diagnosis:**

Legionellosis is diagnosed through chest x-ray or physical exam to confirm pneumonia and the bacteria is identified through a lab test. The most common lab test is the urinary antigen test, but legionellosis can also be diagnosed by culture or paired serology.

**Role of the School Nurse:**

**Prevention**

* The key to preventing legionellosis is maintenance of the water systems in which *Legionella* grow, including drinking water systems, hot tubs, decorative fountains, and cooling towers.
  + Check with school maintenance team to ensure upkeep of water systems.

**Treatment Recommendations**

* Legionellosis usually requires antibiotic treatment

**Exclusions**

* There is no need to exclude students from school for legionellosis
* Education modifications may be warranted in children with a positive diagnosis.

**Reporting Requirements**

* Legionellosis is a reportable disease.

**Resources:**

* Maine CDC legionellosis website (including fact sheet) <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/airborne/legionellosis.shtml>
* Federal CDC legionellosis website <http://www.cdc.gov/legionella/index.html>
* OSHA Technical Manual: Legionnaires’ Disease <https://www.osha.gov/dts/osta/otm/otm_iii/otm_iii_7.html>