

Pontiac Fever

What is Pontiac fever?

Pontiac fever is an illness caused by respiratory contact with the *Legionella* bacteria. Pontiac fever is a mild febrile respiratory illness that is relatively uncommon. Pontiac fever differs from Legionnaires' disease in that patients do not develop pneumonia. Most cases occur as single isolated events, however a few outbreaks have been identified throughout the world.

Where are *Legionella* bacteria found?

Legionella can be found in any type of water system. The organism has been found in the environment in creeks, ponds, and potting soil. The bacteria are prevalent in warm stagnant water such as those found in most plumbing systems, hot water tanks, water in cooling towers, evaporative condensers of large air conditioning systems, and hot tubs. Home and automobile air conditioners are **NOT** a source of *Legionella* bacteria.

How is Pontiac fever spread?

The disease is acquired after inhaling mists from a water source that contains *Legionella* bacteria. The disease **cannot** be spread from person-to-person.

What are the usual symptoms of Pontiac fever?

The symptoms of Pontiac fever usually last for two to five days and may include chills, fatigue, headaches and muscle aches. The fever commonly reaches a temperature of 102°F to 105°F. Symptoms will go away on their own without treatment.

How soon do symptoms occur?

The period between exposure and onset of illness for Pontiac fever is five to 66 hours, but most often 24 to 48 hours.

Who gets Pontiac fever?

In documented outbreaks of Pontiac fever, approximately 90% of those exposed developed illness.

What is the treatment for Pontiac fever?

In general, persons with Pontiac fever recover in two to five days without treatment.

