

# Chief Health Officer Alert Legionnaires' disease

## Information for General Practitioners

**Wednesday, 26 May 2010**

Notifications for Legionnaires' disease this year have doubled in numbers compared to the same time period in 2009. The majority of cases have been caused by *Legionella pneumophila* serogroup 1. The cause for this increase is unclear.

Given this finding, Legionnaires' disease should be considered for patients presenting with influenza-like symptoms such as headache, fever, rigors, cough, and myalgia, particularly in those with pneumonia or dyspnoea.

Rapid confirmation within 24 hours can be obtained by urinary antigen testing. Sputum for culture should be sought in all cases.

A four-fold rise in titre between acute and convalescent sera, or a single high titre of 512 in a convalescent serum sample is also diagnostic. However, a rise in titre may take 2 to 4 weeks to develop.

Legionnaires' disease is a notifiable condition which requires immediate notification to the Department of Health by telephone upon initial diagnosis (presumptive or confirmed) with written notification to follow within five days.

The number of notified cases can be viewed on the Health Department's website under tabulated summaries at the following web address:  
<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/ideas/surveillance>

**For further information or to notify a case please contact the Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Unit at the Department of Health on 1300 651 160.**

Yours sincerely



Dr John Carnie  
Chief Health Officer