

LEGIONELLOSIS - ITALY (VENICE): ALERT

A ProMED-mail post <<http://www.promedmail.org>>

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<<http://www.ndsc.ie/hpsc/News/Title,1943,en.html>>

EWGLINET (The European Working Group for Legionella Infection) has alerted the HPSC of an outbreak of legionnaires' disease in Venice, Italy. As of 11 Sep 2006, 15 cases of community-acquired legionnaires' disease associated with the center of Venice have been confirmed. No deaths have occurred to date. The date of onset of symptoms ranges from 20 Jul to 31 Aug 2006.

Environmental investigations are in progress to identify the source of this outbreak.

Legionnaires' disease is a type of pneumonia caused by Legionella bacteria. The early symptoms include a flu-like illness with muscle aches, tiredness, headaches, dry cough and fever. Some people develop diarrhea or may become confused. Deaths occur in 10-15 percent of otherwise healthy individuals and may be higher in some groups of patients. The incubation period ranges from 2 to 10 days but is usually 5 to 6 days. In rare cases people may develop symptoms as late as 3 weeks after exposure.

It is advisable that any persons who visited Venice from early Aug 2006 onwards who develop symptoms similar to those outlined above would seek medical advice and visit their physician. In particular, they should inform him/her that they have visited Venice and that an outbreak of Legionnaires' disease has occurred there.

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[This alert is important since the city is a major site for tourism and symptoms may not develop until the traveler has returned home.

A map of Italy showing the location of Venice in the northeast part of the country can be found at: <http://www.europeanrailguide.com/maps/maps_src/italy.gif> - Mod. LL]