

Bacteria problem reported at hospital, at least 4 patients sick

By [Ben Sutherly](#), Staff Writer

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DAYTON — Four Miami Valley Hospital patients with confirmed cases of Legionnaires' disease likely contracted the illness from contaminated water in the hospital's new patient tower, according to hospital officials.

MVH officials said Wednesday that all four patients are more than 60 years old and had been receiving heart-related care. Three of the patients have been discharged, while one remains hospitalized, said Dr. Gary Collier, the hospital's chief medical officer. Citing privacy concerns, MVH officials declined to comment on the condition of the four. At least 127 other patients receiving care in the patient tower Wednesday have been notified of possible exposure.

The first positive case was identified Feb. 3 through a urine test. Subsequent positive tests on Feb. 17, 19 and 20 created an "unusual cluster" that concerned hospital officials.

Officials are trying to determine if the waterborne Legionella bacteria colonized in the plumbing system during construction of the \$135 million patient tower, which began admitting patients Dec. 28 and reached occupancy Jan. 25. The water system was flushed prior to occupancy, a hospital spokeswoman said.

People typically contract the disease by inhaling contaminated water in mist form, such as by taking showers.

The hospital has been in touch with county, state and federal health officials, and is working to control the situation.

Legionnaires' disease got its name in 1976, when high numbers of people attending a Philadelphia convention of the American Legion contracted the lung infection. Each year, 8,000 to 18,000 people are hospitalized with the disease in the U.S. It can cause death in 5 percent to 30 percent of cases, but often is treated successfully with antibiotics.

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