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Iowan Dies From Legionnaires' Disease

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DES MOINES, Iowa -- Iowa Methodist Medical Center officials said Tuesday that they have treated two adults for Legionnaires' disease.

Officials said both patients had severely suppressed immune systems. One patient died, but the other was treated and recovered.

Methodist has been working with Iowa Department of Public Health on the cases.

"They're going to be protected. We're doing everything we can to kill the bacteria and to keep them safe while they're here in the hospital," said Jen Perry, Iowa Methodist Medical Center spokeswoman.

Test results suggest that Legionella bacteria was present in a few select patient rooms – principally the water coming from the showerhead and the in-room sink. It is important to note that no Legionella bacteria is present in our main water supply, officials said.

All areas that tested positive have been treated, officials said.

"We put special filters in all the rooms where we have immune suppressed patients," said Perry. "Any immune-suppressed patient was put on water restrictions -- they have to have sterile or bottled water."

Legionella bacteria are commonly found in a number of locations – such as hospitals, hotels and even homes. It is for the most part harmless unless people have severe immune challenges.

"Most of the time we don't worry about it," said State Epidemiologist Dr. Patricia Quinlisk.

Quinlisk said most people have antibodies that make them resistant to Legionnaire's.

"It could be in your shower head in your home. Could be in water fountain here in this building," said Quinlisk.

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Video: Iowan Dies From Legionnaires' Disease

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