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Legionella Found In Sacred Heart Water Supply

Tori Brunetti | KXLY4 Anchor / Reporter

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SPOKANE, Wash. -- Sacred Heart Medical Center is restricting showering, hand washing and only letting their patients drink bottled water because they have found Legionella in their water supply.

Legionella causes Legionnaires Disease, and three patients have been diagnosed with the disease so far. Two patients were diagnosed with the in January and another in March. Each of them were older people, with suppressed immune systems, who made frequent trips to the hospital.



It was after the third diagnosis of Legionnaires Disease in March that the hospital decided to test their water for Legionella.

Legionella is a relatively common form of bacteria that grows in wet places. If the bacteria is found in a water supply, people can inhale the Legionelle when they turn on a faucet, take a shower or drink from a fountain.

That is what officials think is happening at Sacred Heart.

After SHMC discovered their third case of Legionnaires Disease they called the CDC. The CDC was at Sacred Heart last week to run tests and preliminary results came back positive for Legionella in the water supply Wednesday.

Since then Sacred Heart has limited patient showering, hand washing and everyone has to drink bottled water.

Sacred Heart has cleaned all their water tanks to get rid of the bacteria and on Monday they will hyper chlorinate their water.

The first patient diagnosed has died but the hospital says it's unlikely they died from Legionnaires Disease.

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