

Clarity Pool & Spa RWI Guide For Spas

Spa rules for safe and healthy use.

- 1) Refrain from entering the spa when you have diarrhea.
- 2) Avoid swallowing spa water or even getting it into your mouth.
- 3) Shower or bathe with soap before entering the spa.
- 4) Observe limits, often found in your spa's manual, on the maximum allowable number of bathers.
- 5) Exclude children less than 5 years of age from using spas.
- 6) If pregnant, consult a physician before spa use, particularly in the first trimester.



Swimming To Your Health

Observe and listen to the spa and its surroundings. What should you notice?

- 1) No odor. A well chlorinated spa has little odor. A strong chemical smell indicates a maintenance problem.
- 2) Smooth spa sides and the tiles should not be sticky or slippery.
- 3) Spa equipment is working. Pumps and filtration systems make noise and you should hear them running.
- 4) Spa temperature should not exceed 104 F (40 C).
- 5) Check the spa water for adequate chlorine or bromine levels.

Talk to your spa service technician.

- 1) What chemistry levels do they check and how often?
- 2) What training or certifications have they gone through to qualify for servicing your spa.
- 3) What do they know about RWIs and how to prevent them.
- 4) Ask them questions to test their knowledge.

Next we will discuss two Recreational Water Illnesses that are commonly asked about, and discuss how to protect yourself from them.

Hot Tub Rash (Pseudomonas Dermatitis/Folliculitis) A RWI Found In Spas

What is Dermatitis?

Hot Tub Rash or *Dermatitis* is an infection of the skin. The skin may become itchy and progress to a red bumpy rash that may become tender. There may also be pus-filled blisters that are usually found surrounding hair follicles. Because a swimsuit can keep contaminated water in longer contact with the skin, the rash may be worse under a person's swimsuit.

What causes Hot Tub Rash?

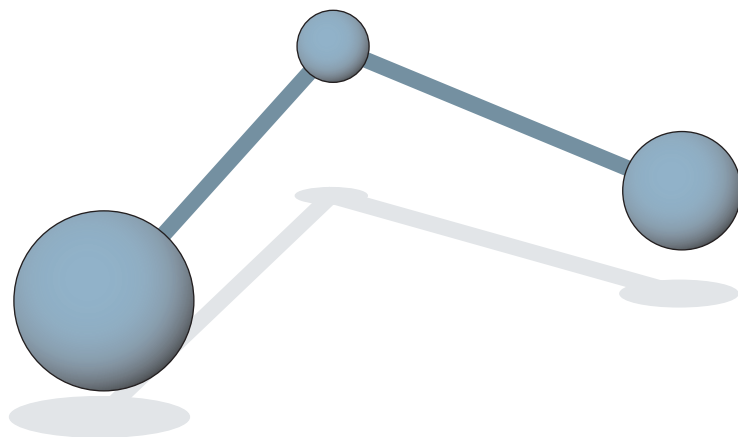
Hot Tub Rash infections are often caused by the germ *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*. This germ is common in the environment (water, soil) and is microscopic so that it can't be seen with the naked eye. Most rashes clear up in a few days without medical treatment. However, if your rash persists, consult your health care provider immediately.

How is HotTub Rash spread?

Hot Tub Rash is spread by direct skin contact with contaminated water. The rash usually occurs within a few days of swimming in poorly maintained hot tubs or spas, but can also be spread by swimming in a contaminated pool.

How can I protect myself from Hot Tub Rash?

Be aware that hot tubs and spas have warmer water than pools, so chlorine or other disinfectants break down faster. This leaves hot tubs and spas at risk for the spread of RWIs. Therefore, ask your spa technician about the disinfectant and pH testing of your hot tub or spa. Controlling these elements will likely prevent the spread of Hot Tub Rash.



Legionnaires' Disease - A RWI Found In Spas

What is Legionnaires' disease?

Legionnaires' disease (LEE-juh-nares) is caused by a type of bacteria called *Legionella*. More illnesses from Legionnaires' disease are being detected now because it is now being tested for whenever a patient has pneumonia.

Each year, between 8,000 and 18,000 people are hospitalized with Legionnaires' disease in the U.S. However, many infections are not diagnosed or reported, so this number may be higher.

What are the symptoms of Legionnaires' disease?

Legionnaires' disease can have symptoms like many other forms of pneumonia, so it can be hard to diagnose at first. Signs of the disease can include a high fever, chills, and a cough. Some people may also suffer from muscle aches and headaches. Chest X-rays are needed to find the pneumonia caused by the bacteria, and other tests can be done on sputum (phlegm), as well as blood or urine to find evidence of the bacteria in the body. These symptoms usually begin 2 to 14 days after being exposed to bacteria.

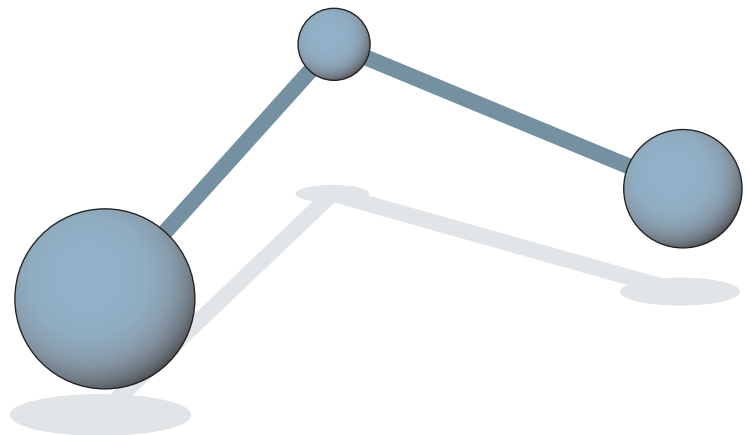
A milder infection caused by the same type of *Legionella* bacteria is called Pontiac Fever. The symptoms of Pontiac Fever usually last for 2 to 5 days and may also include fever, headaches and muscle aches; however, there is no pneumonia. Symptoms go away on their own without treatment and without causing further problems.

How serious is it and what is the treatment?

Legionnaires' disease can be very serious and can cause death in up to 5% to 30% of cases. Most cases can be treated successfully with antibiotics, and healthy people usually recover from the infection.

How do people get Legionnaires' disease?

People get Legionnaires' disease from breathing in a mist or vapor that has been contaminated with the bacteria, such as steam from a contaminated spa. The bacteria is NOT spread from one person to another.





Legionnaires' Disease - A RWI Found In Spas

Who gets this disease?

People most at risk of getting sick from the bacteria are older people (usually 65 or older), as well as people who are smokers, or those who have a chronic lung disease.

What should I do if I think I was exposed to Legionella bacteria?

Most people exposed to the bacteria do not become ill. If you have reason to believe you were exposed to the bacteria, talk to your doctor or a local health department.

