Legionnaires' disease
Legionnaires’ disease is a rare form of pneumonia. Not everyone who comes into contact with the bacteria is affected. If you have the symptoms, contact your doctor immediately. Early treatment can prevent the disease from becoming severe. Always take care when using potting mix.

Legionnaires’ disease is caused by *Legionella* bacteria, which are widespread in our environment. They are found in natural water bodies such as rivers, lakes, creeks and hot springs. The bacteria are also found in spas, potting mix, warm water systems and artificial systems that use water for cooling, heating or industrial processes, such as cooling towers. A person may catch Legionnaires’ disease by breathing in fine droplets of water that contain the bacteria. You cannot catch it from another person or by drinking contaminated water.

**Risks of Legionella infection**

Although this is a common kind of bacteria in the environment, only a few people who come in contact with the bacteria become infected. Some people are at greater risk, such as people who:

- are older (usually over 65)
- smoke
- drink heavily
- have chronic lung disease
- have underlying medical conditions such as diabetes, cancer or kidney failure.

**Symptoms of Legionnaires’ disease**

The symptoms of Legionnaires’ disease usually begin to appear within six days of being exposed to the bacteria. Early symptoms are like the flu and include:

- headache (often severe)
- fever
- chills
- muscle aches and pains
- a dry cough and shortness of breath.

Sometimes other systems in the body are affected. This can cause:

- diarrhoea
- mental confusion
- kidney failure.

If you have these symptoms, see your doctor.

**Diagnosis and treatment for Legionnaires’ disease**

There are many other causes of Legionnaires’ symptoms and *Legionella* is not very common. Special tests are needed to diagnose the disease. A urine or sputum (mucus that is coughed up) test or blood samples taken three to six weeks apart will usually diagnose Legionnaires’ disease.

The infection can be treated with appropriate antibiotics. There is no vaccine to prevent the disease.

**Prevention of Legionnaires’ disease**

The risk of Legionnaires’ disease can be reduced by ensuring the growth of *Legionella* bacteria in systems such as spas, hot water systems and cooling towers is controlled.

People can also take care to avoid exposure to the bacteria from other sources, such as potting mix and water sources in the home.

**Maintenance and treatment of artificial systems**

A number of different regulations set out how to maintain and treat cooling towers, warm water systems and public spas to prevent the Legionella bacteria growing. For further information, visit *Legionella risk management page*.
Hot water systems

Hot water systems have the potential to harbour *Legionella* in places where there may be stagnant or warm water (25–50 °C). Examples include shower nozzles, hot water taps, hot water storage vessels and hoses or filters attached to shower roses or tap outlets.

Domestic plumbing systems must be installed and maintained correctly to ensure the risk of *Legionella* growth is minimised and to reduce the risk of scalding. Consult a plumber if you have any concerns.

Spa pools

Spa pools require careful maintenance, disinfection and frequent cleaning because they provide ideal conditions for the growth of *Legionella*, which can be carried into the lungs by aerosols created by the spa pool jets.

The correct use of spa pool water chemicals, good management of the disinfection, filtration and recirculation systems and regular cleaning of spa pool surfaces can keep spa pool water in a clean, safe and healthy condition.

Fountains

Fountains can create aerosols by splashing water, and are a particular risk if the water is warm or heated intermittently by submerged lighting. Regular draining, cleaning and disinfection is recommended.

Nebulisers and humidifiers

Nebuliser bowls need to be rinsed after each use, and the entire chamber and mask washed daily in warm water and dishwashing liquid. All components then need to be rinsed and allowed to air dry.

Have nebuliser pumps serviced and filters changed regularly, in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions.

When using a humidification device, use only distilled water or water that has been boiled and allowed to cool. After using a humidifier, empty it and clean it in warm water and dishwashing liquid, then rinse and allow all components to air dry.

Spa baths

Drain spa baths after each use, and make sure they are inspected frequently, and cleaned and maintained regularly to ensure hygienic operation. Keep the entire system dry when not in use.

Domestic evaporative air conditioners

Although there have been no reported cases of Legionnaires’ disease connected with the use of domestic evaporative cooling systems, correct maintenance is essential to control the accumulation of sediment, bacteria, mould and algal growth inside the unit.

Always use and maintain evaporative cooling systems in accordance with manufacturer’s guidelines.

Portable evaporative cooling units

Portable evaporative cooling units need to be completely drained at least once a week during the summer season.

When units are not being used for an extended period they need to be completely drained, cleaned, and left to dry.

Take care with potting mix

In recent years, some cases of Legionnaires’ disease have been linked to the use of potting mix. To minimise the risk of contracting Legionnaires’ disease from soil, compost or potting mix, take the following precautions:

- Always wear a mask and gloves when handling soil, compost or potting mix.
- Wash hands carefully with soap and water after handling soil and before eating, drinking, smoking or placing hands near the face or mouth.
- Store bags of potting mix in a cool dry place. When stored in the sunlight, the temperature inside the bag can increase, creating an ideal environment for *Legionella* bacteria to grow.
- Open bags in a well ventilated space.
- Open bags of composted potting mix slowly, directing the opening away from the face to avoid inhaling the mix. Wet the soil to reduce dust when potting plants.
- Water gardens and composts gently, using a low-pressure hose.
- Avoid breathing in droplets of water from dripping pot plants, including hanging baskets, and when watering plants.

Where to get help

- Your GP (doctor)
- Your local hospital
- Your local council
- Communicable Disease Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit, Department of Health and Human Services, Victorian Government Tel. 1300 651 160

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Please note that we cannot answer personal medical queries. If you are looking for health or medical advice we recommend that you:

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More information

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
Infections
The following content is displayed as Tabs. Once you have activated a link navigate to the end of the list to view its associated content. The activated link is defined as Active Tab

- Infection explained
- Preventing infections
- Managing infections
- Childhood infections
- Animal to human infections
- A-Z of infectious disorders

Infection explained

- Antibiotic resistant bacteria
  Careful prescribing of antibiotics will minimise the emergence of antibiotic resistant strains of bacteria...
- Beat the Bite
  Beat the Bite is a Victorian government health campaign to highlight awareness of the risk of mosquito-borne diseases in Victoria. Find resources to be printed and shared alone with videos that tell...
- Chest infections
  A chest infection affects your lungs, either in the larger airways (bronchitis) or in the smaller air sacs (pneumonia).
- Fever
  A mild fever up to 39°C can actually help the immune system to get rid of an infection...
- Immunisation history statements for children
  By law, parents or guardians must provide an Immunisation History Statement when enrolling children in any childcare service, kindergarten or primary school in Victoria...
- Infection risk - cardiac surgery and mycobacteria
  Mycobacterium chimaera is a type of bacterium known as a non-tuberculous mycobacterium (NTM). There is a risk that heater cooler units (HCUs) used in cardiac (heart) surgery may be contaminated with...
- Who provides immunisations in Victoria
  Immunisations in Victoria are provided by local councils, GPs and specially qualified nurses in medical clinics and community health services, some Maternal and Child Health nurses, travel clinics and...

Preventing infections

- Antibacterial cleaning products
  The Western obsession with cleanliness may be partly responsible for the increase in allergic asthma and conditions such as rhinitis...
- Beat the Bite! Mosquito-borne disease risk and management (video)
  Dr Finn Romanes, public health doctor at Victoria Department of Health and Human Services explains the department’s program to monitor and manage the risks associated with Mosquitoes. Learn about the...
- Food safety while travelling
  Travelling, eating and drinking go together but unfortunately, traveller's diarrhoea and other food-related illnesses can sometimes come along for the ride...
- Handwashing - why it's important
  Washing your hands with soap and warm water can help prevent the spread of infectious diseases...
- Home tattooing
  Home tattooing, or getting tattoos overseas, puts you at risk of serious complications that can be debilitating and life-long...
- Immunisation history statements for children
  By law, parents or guardians must provide an Immunisation History Statement when enrolling children in any childcare service, kindergarten or primary school in Victoria...
- Kissing and your health
  While disease-causing bugs can be transferred during a kiss, most won't cause disease and the risk of serious disease is very small...
- Personal hygiene

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Good personal hygiene is one of the most effective ways to protect ourselves and others from illness.

- Pets – safe handling of reptiles and tropical fish
  People in contact with tropical fish and reptiles such as turtles, lizards and snakes may be at risk of infections and illness due to germs (such as bacteria, viruses and parasites) carried on the...

- Piercings
  If you want to have your body pierced, choose an experienced, registered practitioner to reduce the risks of infection and scarring.

- Preventing healthcare associated infection (HAI)
  There are things you can do to reduce the chance of getting an infection while you are in hospital.

- Quarantine at home - coping tips
  You may be asked to quarantine yourself at home if you have developed, or been exposed to, an infectious disease.

- Tattoos
  If you want to get a tattoo, choose an experienced, registered practitioner to reduce the risks of infection and scarring.

- Time to immunise - free vaccines for men who have sex with men
  Immunisation is one of the best ways you can protect yourself and others from infectious diseases in our community. In partnership with Thorne Harbour Health (formerly Victorian AIDS Council), the...

- Travel health and safety tips (slideshow)
  We all love travelling to new and exotic places, but unfortunately illnesses and unforeseen events can ruin the trip of a lifetime. With a little effort, take a few of these simple precautions to make...

- Travel immunisation
  If you are travelling overseas, check with your doctor well in advance to find out what immunisations you need.

- Vaccines
  Vaccines trick the body into building immunity against infectious diseases without causing the actual disease.

- Who provides immunisations in Victoria
  Immunisations in Victoria are provided by local councils, GPs and specially qualified nurses in medical clinics and community health services, some Maternal and Child Health nurses, travel clinics and...

- Workplace safety - infection control
  The spread of many pathogens in the workplace can be prevented with regular hand washing.

Managing infections

- Antibiotic resistant bacteria
  Careful prescribing of antibiotics will minimise the emergence of antibiotic resistant strains of bacteria.

- Handwashing - why it's important
  Washing your hands with soap and warm water can help prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

- Medicines and side effects
  Complementary medicines can interact with pharmaceutical medicines.

- Medicines - safety issues
  Make sure your doctor knows about every medicine you take, including vitamins.

- Preventing healthcare associated infection (HAI)
  There are things you can do to reduce the chance of getting an infection while you are in hospital.

- Quarantine at home - coping tips
  You may be asked to quarantine yourself at home if you have developed, or been exposed to, an infectious disease.

- Workplace safety - infection control
  The spread of many pathogens in the workplace can be prevented with regular hand washing.

Childhood infections
Beat the Bite
Beat the Bite is a Victorian government health campaign to highlight awareness of the risk of mosquito-borne diseases in Victoria. Find resources to be printed and shared along with videos that tell...

Boils
Some areas of the body are more susceptible to boils, including the face, throat, armpits, groin and buttocks.

Chickenpox
Chickenpox is highly contagious, but it is generally mild and gets better without the need for special treatment.

Coughing and wheezing in children
Coughing and wheezing in babies can be distressing for you and your baby, but in most cases symptoms can be relieved at home.

Croup
Croup is a viral infection of the throat and windpipe that causes noisy breathing, a hoarse voice and a harsh, barking cough.

Diphtheria
Diphtheria is a serious bacterial disease that causes severe inflammation of the nose, throat and windpipe.

Fever - children
Fever is a way in which the body fights infection. A fever is not dangerous and does not always indicate a serious illness.

Fever - febrile convulsions
A febrile convolution is a fit that occurs in children when they have a high fever.

Gastroenteritis in children
Gastroenteritis or Gastro can be dangerous for very young babies. Gastro is common in young children and spreads easily. Gastro is a bowel infection which causes diarrhoea (runny or watery poo) and...

Hand, foot and mouth disease
Good personal hygiene is essential to prevent the spread of hand, foot and mouth disease to others, both for those infected and their carers.

Impetigo - school sores
Impetigo, or school sores, is a highly contagious skin infection that commonly affects school-aged children.

Measles
Measles can cause serious and sometimes fatal complications, including pneumonia and brain inflammation.

Measles, mumps, rubella, varicella (chickenpox) – immunisation
Immunisation is the best protection against measles, mumps, rubella and varicella (chickenpox).

Melissa's story (video)
Melissa shares her story of how her baby caught chickenpox at 5 weeks old.

Meningitis
Meningitis can cause death and requires urgent medical attention.

Middle ear infections
Middle ear infections often happen during or after a child has a cold.

Mumps
Mumps is a viral illness that causes fever and swollen salivary glands, and a swollen face.

Roseola infanum
Roseola is a mild viral infection with associated fever and rash that affects babies and young children.

Rubella
Rubella is a mild illness for most people, but very dangerous for pregnant women and their babies.

Slapped cheek disease
Children with slapped cheek do not need to be kept home from school or day care, as cases are only contagious before the onset of the rash.

Streptococcal infection – group B

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
Group B streptococcal bacteria can cause a wide range of illnesses in susceptible people including newborns, the elderly and those with pre-existing medical conditions such as diabetes or cancer. Out...

- **Viral encephalitis**
  
  Viral encephalitis is inflammation of the brain caused by a virus and can cause permanent brain damage...

- **Whooping cough**
  
  The major symptom of whooping cough is a severe cough, which is often followed by a 'whooping' sound...

- **Whooping cough – a family’s experience (video)**
  
  A family shares their experience when their baby daughter contracted whooping cough (or pertussis).

### Animal to human infections

- **Anthrax**
  
  Anthrax is a rare but potentially fatal bacterial disease that occasionally infects humans...

- **Australian bat lyssavirus (ABLV)**
  
  The simplest form of prevention for lyssavirus is to avoid close contact with bats...

- **Barmah Forest virus disease**
  
  Barmah Forest virus (BFV) disease can cause joint inflammation and pain, fatigue and a rash of variable appearance. A full recovery can be expected. Most people recover completely within six months...

- **Beat the Bite**
  
  Beat the Bite is a Victorian government health campaign to highlight awareness of the risk of mosquito-borne diseases in Victoria. Find resources to be printed and shared along with videos that tell...

- **Beat the Bite! Mosquito-borne disease risk and management (video)**
  
  Dr Finn Romanes, public health doctor at Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services explains the department’s program to monitor and manage the risks associated with Mosquitoes. Learn about the...

- **Bird flu (avian influenza)**
  
  The symptoms of bird flu in humans are similar to those of regular influenza...

- **Dengue virus disease**
  
  Dengue virus disease (dengue fever, or ‘dengue’) is a viral disease transmitted by mosquitoes in many tropical and subtropical parts of the world...

- **Hendra virus**
  
  The best defence against Hendra virus is to avoid contact with an infected horse...

- **Leptospirosis**
  
  Leptospirosis is a disease spread from animals to humans, caused by infection with the bacteria Leptospira...

- **Malaria**
  
  Travellers who visit malarial locations should avoid mosquito bites and take anti-malarial drugs...

- **Mosquitoes can carry diseases**
  
  You can reduce the risk of mosquito bites if you get rid of potential mosquito breeding sites around your home...

- **Murray Valley encephalitis**
  
  The only protection from Murray Valley encephalitis (MVE) is to avoid mosquito bites...

- **Pets – safe handling of reptiles and tropical fish**
  
  People in contact with tropical fish and reptiles such as turtles, lizards and snakes may be at risk of infections and illness due to germs (such as bacteria, viruses and parasites) carried on the...

- **Pinworms**
  
  Despite the unsavoury reputation, a pinworms infection (worms) is relatively harmless and easily treated...

- **Psittacosis - parrot fever**
  
  People who have birds as pets, poultry workers and anyone working in aviaries or pet shops, are most at risk of catching psittacosis...

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- **Q fever**
  Q fever is caused by a micro-organism that can be carried by cattle, sheep and goats.

- **Ross River virus disease**
  Most people recover from Ross River virus disease, although some people have symptoms for a year or more.

- **Tapeworms and hydatid disease**
  It's important for your own health to control tapeworm infection in your dog.

- **Toxoplasmosis**
  Problems only occur if a woman becomes infected with parasites that cause toxoplasmosis for the first time while pregnant.

- **West Nile virus**
  All disease-carrying mosquitoes breed in water or require water to enable eggs to hatch.

- **Zika virus**
  Zika virus is a mosquito-borne virus. There is no cure, specific treatment or vaccine for Zika virus.

### A-Z of infectious disorders

- **Anthrax**
  Anthrax is a rare but potentially fatal bacterial disease that occasionally infects humans.

- **Aspergillus**
  Aspergillus is a fungus that commonly grows on rotting vegetation. It can cause asthma symptoms.

- **Australian bat lyssavirus (AHLV)**
  The simplest form of prevention for lyssavirus is to avoid close contact with bats.

- **Bacterial vaginosis**
  Bacterial vaginosis (BV) is caused by an imbalance of the bacteria normally present in the vagina.

- **Barmah Forest virus disease**
  Barmah Forest virus (BFV) disease can cause joint inflammation and pain, fatigue and a rash of variable appearance. A full recovery can be expected. Most people recover completely within six months.

- **Beat the Bite**
  Beat the Bite is a Victorian government health campaign to highlight awareness of the risk of mosquito-borne diseases in Victoria. Find resources to be printed and shared along with videos that tell.

- **Beat the Bite! Mosquito-borne disease risk and management (video)**
  Dr Finn Romanes, public health doctor at Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services explains the department’s program to monitor and manage the risks associated with Mosquitoes. Learn about the.

- **Beat the Bite mosquitoes - learn how to beat the bite (video)**
  Hear from Victoria's Chief Health Officer talk about how you can protect yourself from mosquitoes this season.

- **Bird flu (avian influenza)**
  The symptoms of bird flu in humans are similar to those of regular influenza.

- **Bites and stings – first aid**
  If you are bitten or stung by an insect or animal, apply first aid and seek medical treatment as soon as possible.

- **Boils**
  Some areas of the body are more susceptible to boils, including the face, throat, armpits, groin and buttocks.

- **Botulism**
  Botulism is considered a medical emergency. If untreated, it may cause death.

- **Buruli ulcer**
  Since the ulcer gets bigger with time, early diagnosis and prompt treatment of Bairnsdale disease can keep skin loss to a minimum.

- **Candida auris (C. auris)**

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**betterhealth.vic.gov.au**
Candida is a genus of fungi (yeasts) that live on the skin and inside the human body. Candida auris (also called C. auris) is an uncommon fungus that can cause serious infections...

- Cellulitis
  Cellulitis is a bacterial infection of the skin that occurs most commonly on the lower legs and in areas where the skin is damaged or inflamed.

- Chest infections
  A chest infection affects your lungs, either in the larger airways (bronchitis) or in the smaller air sacs (pneumonia).

- Chickenpox
  Chickenpox is highly contagious, but it is generally mild and gets better without the need for special treatment.

- Chlamydia
  Chlamydia is often called the 'silent infection' because most people do not realise they have it.

- Colds
  Cold viruses are spread by sneezing, coughing and hand contact.

- Cold sores
  Cold sores are blisters around the mouth and nose, caused by the herpes simplex virus.

- Coughing and wheezing in children
  Coughing and wheezing in babies can be distressing for you and your baby, but in most cases symptoms can be relieved at home.

- Croup
  Croup is a viral infection of the throat and windpipe that causes noisy breathing, a hoarse voice and a harsh, barking cough.

- Cystitis
  Cystitis is the most common urinary tract infection in women.

- Cytomegalovirus (CMV)
  If an unborn baby gets CMV from their mother, it can cause hearing loss and intellectual disability.

- Dengue virus disease
  Dengue virus disease (dengue fever, or ‘dengue’) is a viral disease transmitted by mosquitoes in many tropical and subtropical parts of the world.

- Diarrhoea
  Acute diarrhoea in babies and young children can be life threatening.

- Diphtheria
  Diphtheria is a serious bacterial disease that causes severe inflammation of the nose, throat and windpipe.

- Ebola virus disease (EVD)
  Ebola virus is a rare disease that can cause severe symptoms and can be life-threatening.

- Epilepsy
  Epilepsy is an infection that causes inflammation of the epididymis.

- Eyes - trachoma
  A clean face and clean environment are the best protection against trachoma.

- Fatigue fighting tips
  Activity and nutrition help fight fatigue and put more energy into your daily life.

- Fever - children
  Fever is a way in which the body fights infection. A fever is not dangerous and does not always indicate a serious illness.

- Fever - febrile convulsions
  A febrile convolution is a fit that occurs in children when they have a high fever.

- Flu (influenza)
  Influenza (the flu) is caused by a virus. The flu is more than just a bad cold and can occasionally lead to serious complications, including death. Specific antiviral
medication is available. It is...

- Food poisoning - listeria
  Listeria infection is uncommon but very dangerous for the elderly, people whose immune systems are not working properly and pregnant women and their unborn babies.

- Gastroenteritis
  It is important to establish the cause of gastro, as different types of gastroenteritis respond to different treatments.

- Gastroenteritis - amoebiasis
  Amoebiasis can cause diarrhoea among travellers to developing countries.

- Gastroenteritis - campylobacteriosis
  Campylobacteriosis is a type of gastroenteritis and is more common in children under five years of age and young adults.

- Gastroenteritis - cryptosporidiosis
  Outbreaks of cryptosporidiosis have been associated with child care centres, public swimming pools and contaminated water supplies.

- Gastroenteritis - giardiasis
  Most people infected with Giardia parasites do not develop symptoms but can still spread the infection to others.

- Gastroenteritis in children
  Gastroenteritis or Gastro can be dangerous for very young babies. Gastro is common in young children and spreads easily. Gastro is a bowel infection which causes diarrhoea (runny or watery poo) and...

- Gastroenteritis - salmonellosis
  You may be more prone to salmonellosis if you are elderly, have another medical condition (such as a weakened immune system) or are malnourished.

- Gastroenteritis - shigella
  Outbreaks of shigella gastroenteritis can occur in institutional settings, particularly where children are still in nappies or adults are incontinent.

- Genital herpes
  Many people with genital herpes are not aware that they have the infection, because they have no symptoms.

- Genital warts
  Genital warts are one of the most common sexually transmissible infections.

- Glandular fever
  Glandular fever is most common among high school and university students, but young children can also become infected by saliva on toys, shared cups, or the hands of carers.

- Gonorrhoea
  Gonorrhoea, also spelt gonorrhea, affects both men and women and is transmitted during sex, it may lead to infertility in women if left untreated.

- Haemolytic uraemic syndrome
  Haemolytic uraemic syndrome (HUS) is a rare condition which can lead to chronic kidney damage or death from kidney failure.

- Hand, foot and mouth disease
  Good personal hygiene is essential to prevent the spread of hand, foot and mouth disease to others, both for those infected and their carers.

- Heart conditions - endocarditis
  Endocarditis is an infection of the heart valves or the inner lining of the heart.

- Hendra virus
  The best defence against Hendra virus is to avoid contact with an infected horse.

- Hepatitis
  Hepatitis is an umbrella term for several diseases that affect the liver.

- Hepatitis A
  Immunisation is the best protection against hepatitis A infection and it is recommended for people in high-risk groups.

- Hepatitis B
Hepatitis B is a viral infection that affects the liver and can lead to serious illness or death.

- Hepatitis C
  In Australia, hepatitis C is most often spread through the sharing of unsterile drug injecting equipment. New all oral combination treatment has greatly improved health outcomes for people with.

- Hepatitis C Cure - what it means for Victorians (video)

- HIV
  In Australia, HIV is most commonly spread when having sex without a condom and when sharing needles and other injecting equipment.

- Impetigo - school sores
  Impetigo, or school sores, is a highly contagious skin infection that commonly affects school-aged children.

- Labyrinthitis and vestibular neuritis
  Labyrinthitis and vestibular neuritis are disorders that result in inflammation of the inner ear and the nerve connecting the inner ear to the brain.

- Legionnaires' disease
  Legionnaires' disease is a rare form of pneumonia.

- Leptospirosis
  Leptospirosis is a disease spread from animals to humans, caused by infection with the bacteria Leptospira.

- Malaria
  Travellers who visit malarial locations should avoid mosquito bites and take anti-malarial drugs.

- Measles
  Measles can cause serious and sometimes fatal complications, including pneumonia and brain inflammation.

- Measles, mumps, rubella, varicella (chickenpox) – immunisation
  Immunisation is the best protection against measles, mumps, rubella and varicella (chickenpox).

- Meningitis
  Meningitis can cause death and requires urgent medical attention.

- Meningococcal disease
  Do not leave young adults alone if they suddenly develop a fever because they may become seriously ill very quickly.

- Molluscum contagiosum
  Molluscum contagiosum can be mistaken for genital warts or pimples, check with your doctor for an accurate diagnosis.

- Mosquitoes can carry diseases
  You can reduce the risk of mosquito bites if you get rid of potential mosquito breeding sites around your home.

- Mumps
  Mumps is a viral illness that causes fever and swollen salivary glands, and a swollen face.

- Murray Valley encephalitis
  The only protection from Murray Valley encephalitis (MVE) is to avoid mosquito bites.

- New drugs for the treatment of hepatitis C – Frequently Asked Questions for patients

- Osteomyelitis
  Osteomyelitis means an infection of bone which can either be recent or longstanding.

- Parechovirus
  Good personal hygiene is essential to prevent the spread of parechovirus to others, both for those infected and their carers.
• Pericarditis
  Pericarditis symptoms may be similar to those of heart attack and include chest pain and abnormal heart rhythms.

• Pets – safe handling of reptiles and tropical fish
  People in contact with tropical fish and reptiles such as turtles, lizards and snakes may be at risk of infections and illness due to germs (such as bacteria, viruses and parasites) carried on the...

• Pinworms
  Despite the unsavoury reputation, a pinworm infection (worms) is relatively harmless and easily treated.

• Pleurisy
  Treating any infection of the upper respiratory tract quickly will reduce the risk of developing pleurisy.

• Pneumococcal disease
  Pneumococcal disease is a leading cause of serious illness and death in young children.

• Pneumonia
  Anyone can get pneumonia, but young children and the elderly are most susceptible.

• Polio and post-polio syndrome
  Polio is a serious disease that can cause life-threatening paralysis and possibly death.

• Psittacosis - parrot fever
  People who have birds as pets, poultry workers and anyone working in avaries or pet shops, are most at risk of catching psittacosis.

• Q fever
  Q fever is caused by a micro-organism that can be carried by cattle, sheep and goats.

• Reactive arthritis
  Reactive arthritis is a form of arthritis that occurs as a result of some bacterial infections.

• Rheumatic fever
  Untreated rheumatic fever can lead to serious complications such as rheumatic heart disease.

• Roseola infantum
  Roseola is a mild viral infection with associated fever and rash that affects babies and young children.

• Ross River virus disease
  Most people recover from Ross River virus disease, although some people have symptoms for a year or more.

• Rotavirus
  Rotavirus is a common cause of viral gastroenteritis for Australian babies and preschool children.

• Rubella
  Rubella is a mild illness for most people, but very dangerous for pregnant women and their babies.

• Salpingitis
  Salpingitis is one of the most common causes of female infertility and may permanently damage the fallopian tubes.

• Septicaemia
  Bacteria in the bowels, urinary tract, mouth and skin can cause disease if they get into the bloodstream.

• Shiga toxin-producing E.coli
  There are many types of E.coli bacteria, most of which are harmless. However, some types of E.coli produce toxins (poisons) that can cause gastroenteritis (gastro). One of these types of E.coli is...

• Shingles
  Shingles is caused by the same virus responsible for chickenpox.

• Slapped cheek disease
  Children with slapped cheek do not need to be kept home from school or day care, as cases are only contagious before the onset of the rash.
Smallpox
Smallpox was once a feared and highly contagious viral disease.

Staphylococcus aureus - golden staph
Hospital patients are more likely to be infected by golden staph because of surgical or other wounds.

Streptococcal infection - group A
Streptococcal infection ? group A can cause sore throats (pharyngitis), scarlet fever or impetigo (school sores).

Streptococcal infection – group B
Group B streptococcal bacteria can cause a wide range of illnesses in susceptible people including newborns, the elderly and those with pre-existing medical conditions such as diabetes or cancer. Out...

Styes
Styes may be red and sore, but they generally do not cause any damage to the eye or eyelids.

Swimmer's ear
Swimmer's ear can be triggered by exposure to water or mechanical damage due to overzealous cleaning.

Tapeworms and hydatid disease
It's important for your own health to control tapeworm infection in your dog.

Tetanus
Tetanus is a life-threatening disease and immunisation is the best way to reduce your risk.

Time to immunise - free vaccines for men who have sex with men
Immunisation is one of the best ways you can protect yourself and others from infectious diseases in our community. In partnership with Thorne Harbour Health (formerly Victorian AIDS Council), the...

Tinea
Tinea is contagious and can be spread by skin-to-skin contact or indirectly through towels, clothes or floors.

Toxic shock syndrome (TSS)
If you think you could have toxic shock syndrome, stop using tampons immediately and go to the emergency department of your nearest hospital.

Toxoplasmosis
Problems only occur if a woman becomes infected with parasites that cause toxoplasmosis for the first time while pregnant.

Travel health - yellow fever immunisation
If you are travelling or passing through areas infected with yellow fever, some countries require you to be vaccinated.

Tuberculosis (TB)
Tuberculosis is spread when a person with an active infection coughs, laughs, sings or sneezes.

Urinary tract infections (UTI)
Urinary tract infections (UTIs) can target the urethra, bladder or kidneys.

Vaginal thrush
Vaginal thrush is a common infection caused by an overgrowth of yeasts in the vagina.

Viral encephalitis
Viral encephalitis is inflammation of the brain caused by a virus and can cause permanent brain damage.

Viral haemorrhagic fever
Viral haemorrhagic fever (VHF) is an extremely infectious and life threatening disease caused by a group of viruses, including the Ebola virus.

Warts
Warts can be stubborn, so you may need to use more than one type of treatment.

West Nile virus
All disease-carrying mosquitoes breed in water or require water to enable eggs to hatch.

Whooping cough
The major symptom of whooping cough is a severe cough, which is often followed by a 'whooping' sound.

- **Whooping cough – a family’s experience (video)**

A family shares their experience when their baby daughter contracted whooping cough (or pertussis).

- **Williams syndrome**

Williams syndrome often goes undiagnosed, which means that some people with the disorder fail to get the support and treatment they need until later in life.

- **Zika virus**

Zika virus is a mosquito-borne virus. There is no cure, specific treatment or vaccine for Zika virus.

**Related Information**

- **Flu (influenza)**

  Influenza (the flu) is caused by a virus. The flu is more than just a bad cold and can occasionally lead to serious complications, including death. Specific antiviral medication is available. It is...

- **Bird flu (avian influenza)**

  The symptoms of bird flu in humans are similar to those of regular influenza.

- **Asthma explained**

  Asthma cannot be cured, but with good management people with asthma can lead normal, active lives.

- **Pleurisy**

  Treating any infection of the upper respiratory tract quickly will reduce the risk of developing pleurisy.

- **Pneumonia**

  Anyone can get pneumonia, but young children and the elderly are most susceptible.

**Home**

**Related information on other websites**

- Department of Health Victoria - Legionella.
- Victorian Government Health Information - Legionnaire’s disease - The facts.

**Content Partner**

This page has been produced in consultation with and approved by: Department of Health and Human Services - RHP&R - Health Protection - Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Unit

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