### Event

**Reminder - Legionella** infection in infants with domestic humidifier exposure

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**Notified by** National Infections Service

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**PHE NIRP Level** N/A

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**Background and Interpretation:**
A recent case of Legionnaires’ disease (*Legionella pneumophila* infection) in a neonate with exposure to domestic humidifier use has illustrated the risk of infection to infants. Humidifiers are a documented source of *Legionella* infection in infants.

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**Implications for PHE Centres**

Health protection teams should continue to consider humidifiers as a potential source of *Legionella* infection.

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**Actions:**

1. PHE microbiologists are requested to cascade to NHS microbiology teams.
2. Centres are requested to cascade to GPs and Local Authorities.

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**Implications and recommendations for NHS services**

**Microbiology services:**
Microbiologists should consider humidifiers as a potential source of *Legionella* infection, including in the domestic setting, in infants. Current testing and treatment guidance do not include routine *Legionella spp.* or *L. pneumophila* testing for children with respiratory infection. However, there is a risk of infection with *L. pneumophila* (serogroup 1 and other serogroups) and potentially other *Legionella spp.* from humidifier use. Testing for *L. pneumophila* and *Legionella spp.* should be considered in cases of humidifier use who present with a severe respiratory tract infection.

**Action:**

1. NHS microbiologists are requested to cascade this briefing note onward to local Paediatric, Neonatology and Directors of Infection Prevention & Control teams.

**Neonatologists and Paediatricians:**
Treating clinicians should consider humidifiers as a source of *L. pneumophila* and *Legionella spp.* infection in infants where humidifier use is known.

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**Recommendations to PHE Centres**
Health protection teams should ensure humidifiers are considered as a potential source of *L. pneumophila* infection.

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**Recommendations to PHE sites and services**
PHE Food, Water and Environmental Laboratories may receive requests for testing.

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**Implications and recommendations for local authorities**
Local Authorities should be aware of the potential risks and should discuss sampling and testing of water from humidifiers where there has been a known case with your local PHE Food, Water and Environment Laboratory.

References/ Sources of information and the Use of humidifiers
Data on methods of cleaning and disinfection are absent. It is recommended that the user complies with the manufacturer’s instructions on water changing, cleaning and disinfection. For more information contact Sara Atkin (NWLHPT.OnCall@phe.gov.uk)