

Record 108 contract Legionnaires disease in New York

August 8 2015

The number of people diagnosed with Legionnaires disease has risen to 108 as America's largest city suffers from a record outbreak of the form of pneumonia, authorities said Saturday.

No new deaths have been reported on top of the 10 announced earlier in the week and officials say the [outbreak](#) is now on the decline.

To date, 94 people have been admitted to the hospital with the infection since the outbreak began on July 10 in the south Bronx, the poorest section of New York state.

The disease is spread by a bacteria, which has recently been discovered in the cooling towers of five buildings in the South Bronx area.

Officials believe the cause of the outbreak came from one of the sites, which has since been cleaned and disinfected.

All those who died were older patients and had pre-existing medical conditions. Legionnaires' disease is not contagious and can be treated with antibiotics.

"This is literally uncharted territory," New York Mayor Bill de Blasio said Saturday.

"We've never seen an outbreak of Legionnaires like this in the city," he told reporters.

"The good news is, this outbreak is clearly tapering off," he added.

The serious pulmonary infection is spread by bacteria that thrive in warm water, such as that found in hot water pipes, air-conditioning systems and industrial ponds.

Infections result from inhaling airborne droplets of contaminated water. The incubation period lasts two to 10 days.

Anyone in the Bronx with symptoms such as fever, coughing and shortness of breath are advised to seek medical attention immediately.

De Blasio said 57 buildings with cooling towers were ordered disinfected on Saturday and 42 would be inspected and disinfected by Sunday.

The city has set new inspection standards for buildings with cooling and condensing units, and impose penalties for failure to comply.

The disease takes its name from its first outbreak, in 1976, at a Philadelphia hotel where a meeting of the American Legion society was being held.

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