

# Legionella bacteria forces CDC office closures

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(HealthDay)—The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

informed employees that office space it rents in the Atlanta area would be closed after *Legionella*, the bacteria that causes legionnaires disease, was found in the buildings, *The New York Times* reported. Fortunately, no employees have been sickened.

Legionnaires disease can be fatal in 10 percent of cases. Some experts have warned of the risk for legionnaires when people return to buildings left vacant for months due to the COVID-19 lockdown, *The Times* said. The bacteria can grow in warm, stagnant water that is not disinfected. The [bacteria](#) can waft through the air and be inhaled when toilets are flushed or faucets are turned on.

The CDC has guidelines to help prevent *Legionella* from spreading as buildings reopen. It is not clear if the buildings where the CDC closed its offices followed its own guidelines. The CDC said in a statement that "during the recent closures at our leased space in Atlanta," the agency, working with the General Services Administration, had "directed the landlord to take protective actions." The affected building will remain closed until the problem is fixed.

"*Legionella* is something that even though we've known about it since the 1970s or so, we're still learning about it every day," Caitlin Proctor, a postdoctoral fellow at Purdue University in Indiana, told *The Times*. "That the CDC can't prevent *Legionella* contamination in their buildings is a sign that we all need to be proactive about this issue."

**More information:** [The New York Times Article](#)

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