

ANDREW J SPANO
County Executive

Joshua B. Lipsman, M.D., J.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner, Department of Health

ATTENTION

Public Health Update

The Westchester County Department of Health provides public health updates to members of the medical community on important issues affecting public health in Westchester

DATE: 8/6/09

SUBJECT: LEGIONNAIRE'S DISEASE

New York City and New Jersey have reported an increase in the number of cases of Legionnaire's disease in June 2009 compared to the same period last year. 7 cases of Legionnaire's disease have been identified in Westchester with onset dates between 6/14/09 and 7/24/09. All cases appear sporadic (no epidemiological link identified) and had underlying risk factors for such infection. While this is not a significant increase from previous years, WCDH is monitoring this closely.

Westchester County Department of Health is requesting that medical providers consider *Legionella* in the differential for patients with pneumonia.

Appropriate testing for *Legionella* infection, should include **BOTH**:

- *Legionella* urine antigen
- Sputum specimens for culture, collected prior to initiating antibiotics

The Westchester Public Health Lab will perform *Legionella* sputum cultures free of charge. Only sputum cultures can help identify the source of infection and are thus critical to obtain.

Sputum specimens should be collected in sterile containers WITHOUT saline, refrigerated (2-4° C) and transported to the Westchester Public Health Lab, as soon as possible, and within 48 hours. If not shipped within 48 hours, specimens must be frozen until shipped, preferably within 72 hours of collection.

PLEASE NOTIFY THE WESTCHESTER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH OF ANY SUSPECT CASES OF LEGIONELLA AT:

(914) 813-5159	Mon-Fri 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM
(914) 813-5000	24 hours/day; 7 days/week

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,
Maureen Keating
Maureen Keating, FNP
Communicable Diseases

Yonhee Cha
Yonhee Cha, M.D.
Director, Communicable Diseases