

Legionellosis

Legionellosis is usually an acute respiratory tract infection that begins two to 14 days after exposure to *Legionella* spp. Signs of the disease can include a high fever, chills and cough, in addition to head and muscle aches. Since symptoms are similar to those seen in other forms of pneumonia, the diagnosis is rarely obvious and can be difficult to make. Available confirmatory diagnostic tests include urine antigen detection, direct fluorescent antibody staining, and culture.

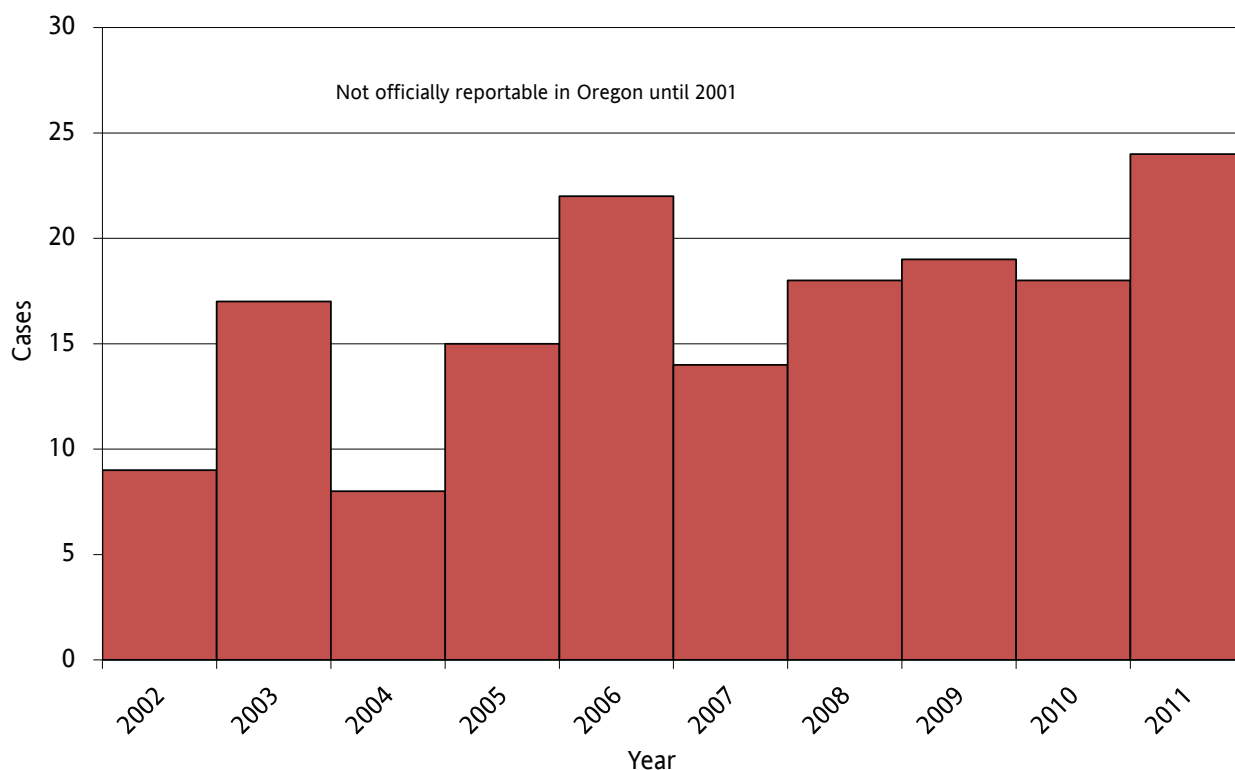
“Pontiac fever,” a milder illness associated with *Legionella* bacteria, is characterized by fever and myalgias without pneumonia. It typically occurs a few hours to two days after exposure.

Legionella bacteria are found naturally in the environment, usually in water, and grow best in warm conditions such as hot tubs, cooling towers, hot water tanks, large plumbing systems, or the air-conditioning systems of large buildings. Person-to-person transmission does not occur.

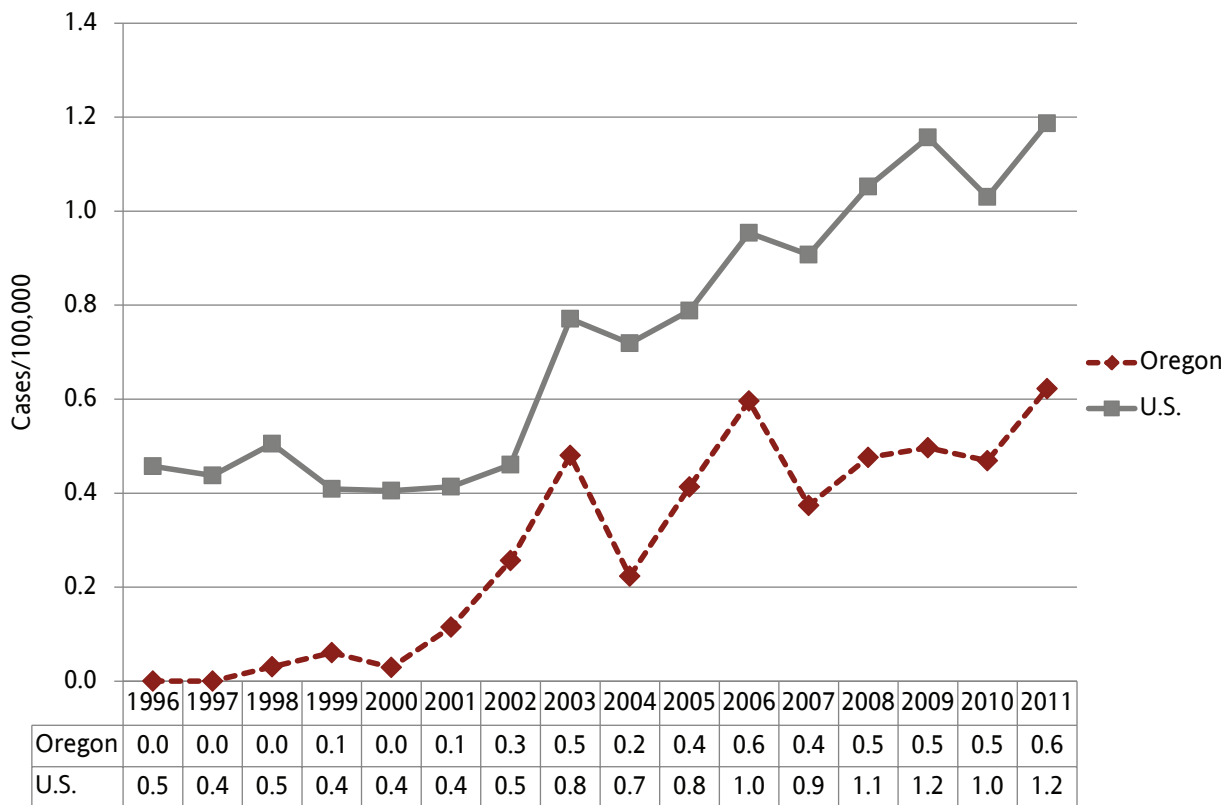
Risks for infection include older age, smoking, chronic lung disease (like emphysema), renal insufficiency, diabetes and immune deficiency. Death occurs in 10% to 15% of cases; a substantially higher proportion of fatal cases occur during nosocomial outbreaks.

Legionellosis became officially reportable in Oregon in 2001. In 2011, 24 cases of legionellosis were reported among Oregonians, 25% higher than the number of cases reported in 2010 (n=18). All 24 cases reported in 2011 were hospitalized. There were two deaths.

Legionellosis by year: Oregon, 2002–2011



Incidence of legionellosis: Oregon vs. nationwide, 2001–2011



Incidence of legionellosis by county of residence: Oregon, 2001–2011

