



STAFF PHOTO/SANDRA BOLAN

A resident of Speciality Care Bloomington Cove has died after testing positive for legionnaires disease. But York Region's community and health services department is unable to say if the disease was the cause of death. The home is on Ninth Line north of Stouffville.

## No legionnaires outbreak, Bloomington home says

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A resident of Speciality Care Bloomington Cove has died after testing positive for legionnaires disease.

But York Region's community and health services department is unable to say if the disease was the cause of death.

"This person did have underlying health conditions (and) I don't think we'll ever know," York Region health services infectious diseases control acting director Joy Marshall said.

The female resident fell ill earlier this month and was sent to hospital, where the legionnaires test was conducted, she said.

"Someone picked up on it when this person was sent to hospital," Ms Marshall said when asked why the test was done.

The disease presents itself like the flu with muscle aches, headaches, tiredness, loss of appetite and coughing followed by a high fever, chills and occasionally diarrhea, according to the health department.

Legionnaires is treatable with antibiotics.

"If we know what we're looking for, very quickly we can treat it," Ms Marshall said.

People older than 50, especially those who smoke heavily, have chronic lung disease or underlying medical conditions, are more susceptible to contracting the disease, according to the region's health department.

The disease is caused by the legionella bacteria, which thrives in warm, stagnant

water found in most plumbing systems, hot water tanks, cooling towers and fountains, according to the health department.

It is not contagious, Speciality Care Bloomington Cove administrator Janet Iwaszczenko said, adding it cannot be contracted by drinking water.

*'We are taking some precautions, but it's business as usual.'*

However, the Ninth Line long-term care facility has taken precautions. Residents are being bathed with a waterless product, bottled water is being used for drinking and cooking and toilet lids are being closed before flushing to avoid backspray, Ms Marshall said.

"This is not an outbreak situation. We are not closed. We are taking some precautions, but it's business as usual," Ms Iwaszczenko said. "No one is sick. No one has it."

Bloomington Cove remains open to visitors, she added.

This is the third case in York Region this year, according to Ms Marshall, who said, on average, the region deals with two to five cases of legionnaires disease annually.

This is the first case at Bloomington Cove, Ms Iwaszczenko said.

"There is no risk to the community," Ms Marshall said. "This is not an unusual situation. We're not seeing any spike in cases."

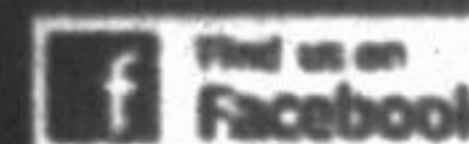
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