



NTM COULD BE THE ANSWER

A disease called nontuberculous mycobacteria (NTM) may be spread through water from contaminated shower heads into the lungs.

WHAT IS NTM?

NTM stands for nontuberculous mycobacteria

Bacteria similar to tuberculosis (TB)

200 There are over 200 different species of NTM

Spread through environment, not person to person

SYMPTOMS

Chronic or recurring cough

Weight loss

Lack of appetite

Night sweats

Loss of energy

Fever

WHO CAN GET NTM?

Anyone can get nontuberculous mycobacteria, but it mostly affects:

People with underlying lung disease (e.g., COPD, bronchiectasis)

Tall, thin women often with skeletal abnormalities such as scoliosis

Immune compromised individuals

30,000 New NTM infections are diagnosed each year.

WHERE IS NTM FOUND?

+ NTM bacteria are abundant in soil and water.

NTM can live in the shower head, indoor plumbing and charcoal filters.

Water droplets and steam in showers can carry the bacteria and be inhaled while showering

Soil particles containing NTM can be inhaled when soil is disturbed

NTM are found in all parts of the world

PREVENTING NTM

Clean your showerhead by soaking in vinegar or a diluted bleach solution

Replace shower heads periodically as needed.

140 Set water heater to 140° (use caution to avoid scalding).

Remove the shower head completely.

Take baths instead of showers.

Avoid steam rooms, hot tubs, etc., where steam or droplets with bacteria particles could be inhaled.

Wear a mask and gloves while gardening.

TREATING NTM

Different species require different treatments

The treatment duration is long, typically 12-18 months

The goal of treatment is to render sputum cultures "negative" for one year

WHAT IS MAC NTM?

Caused by group of bacteria called Mycobacterium avium complex (MAC)

Most common NTM species

Most common cause of NTM in the U.S.

65% Cure rate 65-80%

Usually treated with 3 antibiotics

