A disease called NTM may be spread through water from contaminated shower heads.

**WHAT IS NTM?**
- NTM stands for nontuberculous mycobacteria
- Bacteria similar to tuberculosis (TB)
- There are over 200 different species of NTM
- Spread through environment, not person to person
- Cure rate is about 50%

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**SYMPTOMS**
- Chronic or recurring cough
- Fever
- Weight loss
- Lack of appetite
- Night sweats
- Loss of energy

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**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.

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**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

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**PREVENTING NTM**
- Clean your showerhead by soaking in vinegar or a diluted bleach solution
- Replace shower heads periodically as needed.
- 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.

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**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

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**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.
- Cure rate 65%
- Treated with 3 antibiotics

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**NTM COULD BE THE ANSWER**
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