



Tuberculosis

TB

What is Tuberculosis?

TB is a bacterial infection caused by the *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* bacteria. The bacteria usually affect the lungs, but can affect other parts of the body, such as the kidneys, spine and brain. TB can cause death if not treated.

How does Tuberculosis spread?

TB is spread through the air from one person to another. When someone with TB coughs, sneezes, talks, or sings, bacteria is put into the air. The germs can stay in the air for several hours. A person who breathes in the air containing these germs can become infected (latent infection).

People with latent TB infection, have inactive germs in their body. They are not sick, do not have symptoms, and cannot spread TB.

People with active TB disease have active germs in their bodies that are multiplying and destroying tissue. These people will likely have symptoms and can spread TB germs to others. People with active TB disease are put on medication.

TB cannot be spread through shaking hands, sharing personal items or kissing.

What are the symptoms of Tuberculosis?

Symptoms of active TB include:

- A bad cough that lasts 3 weeks or longer
- Chest pain
- Coughing up blood/bloody mucus
- Weakness or fatigue
- Weight loss
- Decreased appetite
- Chills
- Fever
- Night sweats

How is Tuberculosis prevented?

Since TB is spread through the air by inhaling the germs of someone with active TB infection, the easiest way to prevent infection is to avoid close contact with an infected person. If you have been around someone with active TB disease, contact your physician to see if testing is necessary.



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School Exclusion Policy:

A student with an active TB infection would be followed by a public health professional (TB is required to be reported to health officials). Active TB can be treated with antibiotics. The student would be excluded from school for a period of time (determined by the health official) until they are considered non-contagious.

Resources:

Center for Disease Control & Prevention-

<http://www.cdc.gov/tb/topic/basics/default.htm>

Texas Department of State Health Services-

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/disease/tb/faqs/>

Collin County Health Department-

http://www.co.collin.tx.us/healthcare_services/Pages/tuberculosis.aspx