

## Tuberculosis (TB)

Tuberculosis (TB) is a disease that is spread from person to person through the air. TB can be a serious illness, but is especially dangerous for children younger than 5 years old or for any persons who have weak immune systems, such as those with HIV infection or AIDS. TB is treatable with antibiotic medications.

**CAUSE:** *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* bacteria

**SYMPTOMS:** General symptoms of TB disease may include feeling tired or sick, weight loss, fever or night sweats. When TB is in the lungs there may be cough, chest pain, and possibly coughing up blood. Symptoms often develop gradually and worsen until treatment is started.

**TRANSMISSION:** By droplets that are expelled into the air when someone with TB disease of the lungs coughs or sneezes. These droplets may be breathed in by others.

**INCUBATION:** It takes 2 to 10 weeks after exposure to demonstrate significant tuberculin reaction or primary lesion. For those who develop active TB disease, symptoms are most likely to occur in the two years following exposure but may develop many years later.

**CONTAGIOUS PERIOD:** Only TB disease of the lungs is contagious. The contagious period is from the onset of symptoms until the person receives adequate treatment. This is usually 1 to 3 weeks after starting treatment.



### **EXCLUSION**

A person with probable or confirmed pulmonary TB disease should be excluded until the physician states the patient or child is not contagious.

A person with a positive skin test, but without symptoms, should not be excluded but should see a physician as soon as possible for further evaluation.



### **REPORTABLE**

**PROVIDER:** This disease is reportable to the health department. In Hall, Hamilton, or Merrick County call (308) 385-5175. Outside counties call your local or state health department

**SCHOOL/CHILD CARE FACILITY:** Report all confirmed cases or suspected cases.

**PARENTS/GUARDIANS:** Inform your child care provider if your child has this illness.

## *Prevention & Control*

1. Generally, persons exposed to TB should have a skin test 12 weeks after exposure. For those who have not had a skin test in the past year, one may be done right away to determine what a person's skin test status is.
2. Diagnosis: TB disease is diagnosed by signs and symptoms, skin test, chest X-ray, and laboratory examination of material coughed up from the lungs or other body fluids or tissues.
3. Treatment: TB disease is treated with 2 or more antibiotic medications. LTBI is treated with 1 antibiotic medication to prevent the development of TB disease. Vitamin B6 is sometimes given in either situation.

For more information, you or your physician may call the Central District Health Department at 385-5175, or call your local health department.