
National IHS Public Health Council

National IHS Public Health Council Advisory - Tuberculosis (TB)

Tuberculosis (TB) is caused by germs spread in the air from one person to another. TB is still present in the United States. TB cases have increased in 2021 – 2023 across all age groups in the United States, with the highest prevalence in California and Alaska (MMWR, 2024). Health Care workers are at an increased risk for Latent TB or TB. Therefore, it is recommended that all healthcare personnel should be screened for TB upon hire. An annual test is not recommended unless there is a known exposure or ongoing transmission at the healthcare facility.

Signs and Symptoms of Active TB:

- Cough that lasts 3 weeks or longer
- Pain in the chest
- Coughing up blood or sputum
- Fever/Chills/Sweats
- Weakness

Signs and Symptoms of Inactive/Latent TB:

- No symptoms of TB
- Positive TB test
- Normal chest x-ray and negative laboratory test

Preventive Recommendations:

- Persons with diabetes, HIV, transplantation, and other immunosuppressive conditions should be tested for TB and treated if positive.
- Contact tracing of contacts of people who may have been in close contact with people who tested positive and have active TB symptoms.
- If you test positive for latent/inactive TB, the best way to protect yourself is treatment.

TB can be treated:

- If you test positive, work with your provider to get treated
- Talk with family and friends regarding close contact exposure if you are diagnosed with active TB.

IHS has taken a proactive position on this public health issue, and we will provide further updates as needed.

Thank you for everything you do each day!

dr C

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References

CDC. (2024). Tuberculosis. <https://www.cdc.gov/tb/prevention/index.html>

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<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/73/wr/mm7312a4.htm#:~:text=After%2027%20years%20of%20declining%20U.S.%20TB%20cases%2C%20the%20number,2023%20in%20the%20United%20States.>