



TUBERCULOSIS

Tuberculosis (TB) is a disease caused by a certain type of bacterium. A person *who is sick* with **active tuberculosis disease** may spread the germ when they cough or sneeze. If others inhale the bacteria from the air, they may become infected. But not everyone who is exposed will become infected. A person with Latent TB infection does not feel sick and cannot spread the germs to others.

Does infection mean you will be sick?

No. Many people were infected with TB many years ago when the disease was very common. Only 5-10% of people who are infected will ever get the disease unless they have an impaired immune system.

What is a TB skin test?

A skin test is a method of determining if a person has been infected with the TB germ. A positive TB skin test reaction, however, does NOT necessarily mean the person has TB disease.

How is the test given?

A small amount of PPD (purified protein derivative) is injected just under the surface of the skin on the arm. In 48 to 72 hours, a healthcare provider or nurse will read the test by inspecting the skin.

Who should have skin test?

Persons who have been exposed to an active case of TB, persons born in a foreign country (where TB is common), people infected with HIV (human immunodeficiency virus), healthcare workers and pre-school age childcare staff. It is a law that persons with a positive skin test be reported to the NH Tuberculosis Program.

Persons who have a documented positive reaction to a TB skin test do not need repeat skin tests. Staff with a positive skin test should be evaluated yearly for signs of active disease.

How can TB be prevented?

People who have a positive reaction to a TB skin test can prevent disease by taking medications.

Who should be excluded?

A person with a positive TB skin test should have a medical examination and a chest x-ray and discuss with a healthcare provider about taking preventive therapy. Persons diagnosed with active TB disease should be reported immediately to the Communicable Disease Control Section and should be excluded from attending or working in a childcare center until they are determined to be non-infectious by both a healthcare provider and the Communicable Disease Control Section.

Reportable?

Yes. Active Tuberculosis and persons with a positive skin test are reportable by New Hampshire law to the Division of Public Health Services, Communicable Disease Control Section at (603) 271-4496 or 800-852-3345 ext. 4496.