



December 2, 2022

Dear Community Member:

It has come to our attention that a member of your community has been diagnosed with active tuberculosis (TB). Alaska Public Health Nursing is contacting people who were potentially exposed to evaluate and test them for TB. If you are not contacted by Alaska Public Health Nurses, you likely did not have a significant exposure and do not need to be tested because of this identified case.

TB is a disease caused by germs spread through the air from one person to another. Getting TB typically requires many hours of indoor close contact with a person who is sick from TB. TB is rarely spread to those who spend a small amount of time with the person. It cannot be spread by touching doorknobs, tables, utensils, or other surfaces where a person with TB has been.

Other important things for you to know:

- Most people who are exposed to TB do not get infected.
- Most people who get infected with TB do not get sick.
- People usually do not get sick from TB until months or even years after they get infected.
- People who are infected cannot give TB to others unless they are sick with symptoms.
- A person who is infected but not sick can receive treatment to prevent them from getting sick and spreading TB to family and friends in the future.
- Symptoms of TB can include cough lasting more than 2 weeks, coughing up blood, fevers, night sweats, and weight loss.
- It can take 8-10 weeks for a person's TB test to become positive after they get infected with TB

The TB skin test, or Mantoux PPD tuberculin test, is an injection just under the skin. The tuberculin skin test is a way of identifying TB infection. You cannot get TB from the skin test. If you have been exposed to TB, swelling and redness may develop at the site of the test. A blister may also result. If you have had a positive TB skin test in the past, you do not need to receive another one.

The Alaska Section of Epidemiology, Alaska Section of Public Health Nursing, and your local healthcare providers will be working closely to test the people who were exposed. If anyone is found to have TB infection, they will undergo further evaluation and be offered treatment to prevent them from getting sick. A public health team will also plan to visit the community in approximately two months to provide more widespread community testing for all who are interested.

If you have concerns about possible exposure or are experiencing symptoms of TB, please contact your healthcare provider for an evaluation.

Your and your family's health is a priority. Thank you for working with us during this time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M.R." followed by "MD".

Michelle M. Rothoff, M.D.
TB Controller
State of Alaska, Division of Public Health