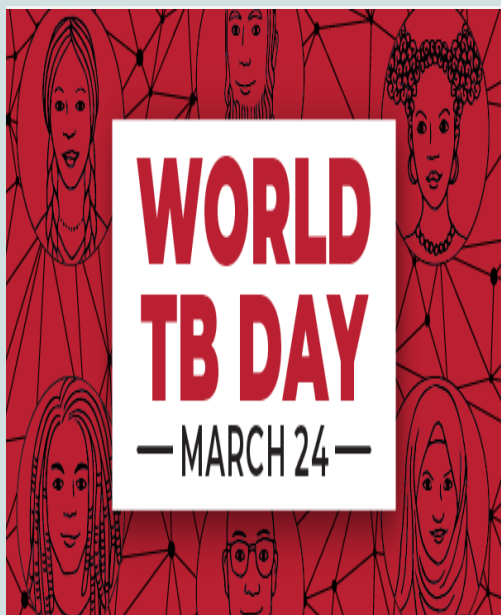


TUBERCULOSIS: GET THE FACTS

World TB Day March 24, 2021



World TB Day, held every year on March 24, is an opportunity for people around the world to raise awareness about the devastating health consequences of tuberculosis (TB) and build support for TB control efforts. The slogan for this year's World TB Day is "Stop TB in my lifetime". This theme encourages individuals and organizations to work together to achieve the goal of a world free of TB. The Jefferson County Department of Health (JCDH) Tuberculosis Program is proud to be part of this effort.

Many people believe that TB is a disease of the past that no longer threatens us today. Although the occurrence of TB in the United States is declining, TB remains one of the world's deadliest diseases. By 2018 globally, there were approximately 10 million active cases of which one million of them were children. However, in Alabama, the number of cases of TB has steadily decreased over the past 30 years. Between 2009 and 2012 the number of cases of active TB in Alabama declined 20% from 168

cases in 2009 to 134 cases in 2012. In 2020, the state recorded 75 active cases. Likely reasons for this decline include a strong collaboration between JCDH, the Alabama Department of Public Health, health care facilities and providers, laboratories, and community groups to address this disease. Although we have made progress, we must continue to work together to reduce the burden of TB in our county and our state.

The mission of the JCDH Tuberculosis Program is to identify, treat, and prevent the spread of tuberculosis disease in Jefferson County and eliminate it as a public health problem. In order to achieve our program goals, we offer a variety of clinical services including testing, preventive and treatment medication, disease screening, and monitoring. We also investigate each case of active TB to identify exposed individuals in the community and offer therapy as needed.

For more information please contact the JCDH Tuberculosis Program at 930-1570

What is TB?

Tuberculosis (TB) is a disease caused by a bacteria (germ) called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. TB usually affects the lungs, but it can also affect other parts of the body, such as the brain, the kidneys, or the spine. A person with TB can die if they do not get treatment.

What are the symptoms of TB?

The general symptoms of TB disease include feelings of sickness or weakness, weight loss, fever, and night sweats. The symptoms of TB disease of the lungs also include coughing, chest pain, and the coughing up of blood. Symptoms of TB disease in other parts of the body depend on the area affected.

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How is TB spread?

TB germs are put into the air when a person with TB disease of the lungs or throat coughs, sneezes, speaks, or sings. Persons who breathe in the air containing these TB germs can become infected. TB is not spread by sharing silverware or cups or through kissing or shaking hands.

What is the difference between latent TB infection and TB disease?

A Person with Latent TB Infection	A Person with TB Disease
Has no symptoms	Has symptoms that may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A cough that lasts for 3 weeks or longer• Pain in the chest• Coughing up phlegm or blood• Weakness or fatigue• Weight loss• No appetite• Chills or fever• Sweating at night
Does not feel sick	Usually feels sick
Can not spread TB germs to others	May spread TB germs to others
Usually has a positive skin test or blood test	Usually has a positive skin test or blood test
Has a normal chest x-ray	Has an abnormal chest x-ray
Needs treatment to prevent active TB disease	Needs treatment to treat active TB disease

How do you get tested for TB?

There are two tests that can be used to help detect TB infection: a skin test or TB blood test. The tuberculin skin test is performed by injecting a small amount of fluid into the skin in the lower part of the arm. A person given the tuberculin skin test must return within 48 to 72 hours to have a trained health care worker look for a reaction on the arm. The TB blood test measures how the patient's immune system reacts to the germs that cause TB.

What does a positive test for TB infection mean?

A positive test for TB infection only tells that a person has been infected with TB germs. It does not tell whether or not the person has TB disease. Other tests, such as a chest x-ray, are needed to see whether the person has TB disease.

What is the BCG vaccine?

BCG is a vaccine for TB disease. BCG is not widely used in the United States, but it is often given to infants and small children in countries where TB is common. The BCG vaccine does not completely prevent adults from getting TB. Even if you have had the BCG vaccine, you can still get a TB skin test or blood test to see if you have TB infection.

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Why is latent TB infection treated?

If you have latent TB infection but not TB disease, your doctor may want you to take a drug to kill the TB germs and prevent you from developing TB disease. Some people are more likely than others to develop TB disease once they have TB infection. This includes people with HIV infection, people who were recently exposed to someone with TB disease, and people with certain medical conditions such as diabetes.

How is TB disease treated?

TB disease can be treated by taking several drugs for 6 to 12 months. It is very important that people who have TB disease finish the medicine, and take the drugs exactly as prescribed. If they stop taking the drugs too soon, they can become sick again; if they do not take the drugs correctly, the germs that are still alive may become resistant to those drugs. TB that is resistant to drugs is harder and more expensive to treat. In some situations, staff of the local health department meet regularly with patients who have TB to watch them take their medications. This is called directly observed therapy (DOT). DOT helps the patient complete treatment in the least amount of time.

For more information on TB and World TB Day, please visit:

CDC, Division of Tuberculosis Elimination: <https://www.cdc.gov/tb/topic/basics/default.htm> (Basic TB Facts)

WHO, Stop TB Partnership: http://www.stoptb.org/events/world_tb_day/2021/ (Facts About TB)

ADPH, Division of Tuberculosis Control: <http://www.adph.org/TB/>

WHO, World TB Day: <https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-tb-day/world-tb-day-2021>

CDC, World TB Day: <https://www.cdc.gov/tb/worldtbdays/default.htm>