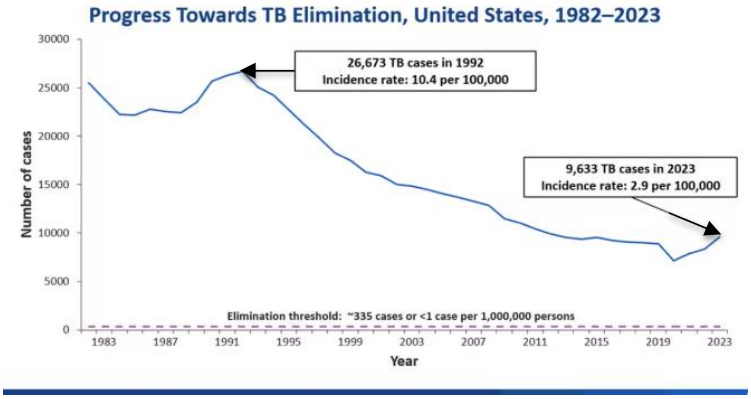
KIDS HEALTH Zone

March 2025 Newsletter

The TB case rate for Nebraska in 2023 was 1.7 cases per 100,000 persons compared to the national case rate in 2023 was 2.9 per 100,000 persons. The recent increase in reported TB cases, both locally and nationally, suggests a potential rise in TB risk.

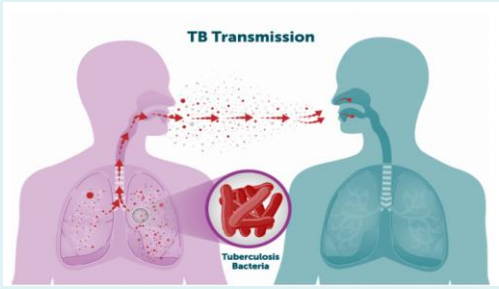


Reported Tuberculosis (TB) disease incidence in the United States, 2023

Tuberculosis (TB), one of the world's leading infectious disease killers, is caused by a bacterium (or germ) called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* usually affecting the lungs, but TB bacteria can attack any part of the body such as the kidney, spine and brain.

How it Spreads: TB is spread through the air from one person to another. TB germs can get into the air when a person with active TB disease of the lungs or throat coughs, speaks, or sings. These germs can stay in the air for several hours, depending on the environment.

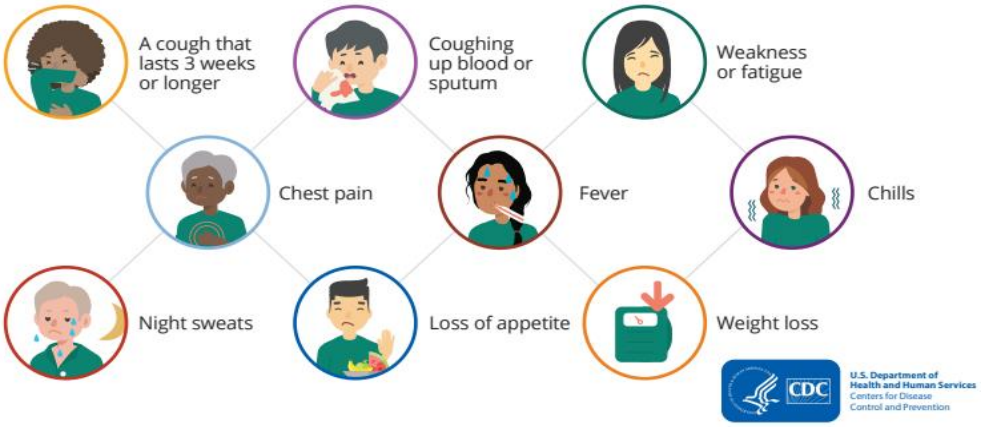
- More likely to spread in indoor areas or other places with poor air circulation.
- People with active TB disease are most likely to spread TB germs to people they spend time with every day.



Risk Factors:

- Recently spent time with someone who has active TB disease.
- Born in or frequently travel to countries where TB is common, including some countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America
- Health care workers and others who work or live in place at high risk for TB transmission, such as homeless shelters, prisons, or jails.
- Have a weaker immune system because of certain medications or health conditions such as diabetes, cancer, and HIV.

Symptoms



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NEBRASKA DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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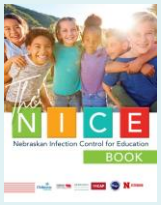
KIDS HEALTH Zone

QUICK LINKS

- About TB
- TB Annual Report 2023
- Tuberculosis in Nebraska
- Signs & Symptoms
- Prevention
- Vaccines
- https://www.cdc.gov/tb/media/Question_Answers_About_TB_English.pdf
- Testing
- Tuberculosis Handbook for School Nurses
- TB in Children & Teens

Nebraskan Infection Control for Education Book - ICAP (nebraskamed.com)



The NICE book offers resources and tools including disease fact sheets that can be printed and shared.

Fun Fact

World TB day is March 24th, the day when Dr. Robert Koch announced his discovery of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis in 1882*, the bacillus that causes tuberculosis (TB).

Not everyone infected with TB germs becomes sick. As a result, two TB-related conditions exist: latent TB infection (or inactive TB) and TB disease. If not treated properly, TB disease can be fatal.

A Person With Inactive TB

- Has TB germs in their body that are alive but inactive.
- No symptoms and does not feel sick.
- Cannot spread TB germs to others.
- Usually has a positive TB blood test or TB skin test indicating TB infection.
- Has a normal chest x-ray and a negative sputum smear.
- Needs treatment for inactive TB to prevent active TB disease.

A Person With Active TB

- Has active TB germs in their body.
- Has symptoms and feels sick.
- May spread TB germs to others.
- Usually has a positive TB blood test or TB skin test indicating TB infection.
- May have an abnormal chest x-ray, or positive sputum smear or culture.
- Needs treatment for active TB disease.

Vaccines:

Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) is a vaccine for TB disease. The vaccine is not generally used in the United States. It is given to infants and small children in countries where TB is common. It protects children from getting severe forms of active TB disease, such as TB meningitis.

Testing:

There are two types of tests that can find TB infection:

- TB Blood Test
- TB Skin Test

A medical evaluation for TB disease includes:

1. Medical history
2. Physical examination
3. Test for TB infection (TB blood test or TB skin test)
4. Chest x-ray
5. Laboratory tests to see if TB germs are present (sputum smear and culture)
6. Laboratory tests for drug resistance

Babies born to women with untreated active TB disease may have a lower birth weight than babies born to women without active TB disease. In rare cases, a baby may be born with TB. Babies may also be at risk for TB through close contact with a person with active TB disease.

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