



Public Health
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Shelby County Health Department

News Release

Shelby County Health Department
814 Jefferson Ave., Memphis, TN 38105

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Health Department Responds to Recent Case of Tuberculosis at Westwood High School

MEMPHIS, TN – The Shelby County Health Department has investigated and is currently investigating a tuberculosis (TB) case of a person at Westwood High School. The person of concern has been treated, is non infectious, and is not a health threat to anyone in the school. We are working closely with Memphis City Schools administration to assure all students and faculty that need to be tested are tested. **Not** all students and faculty need to be tested; only those in closest contact need testing at this point. This investigative process/testing determination is done in accordance with CDC (Center for Disease Control) guidelines. This situation is not considered a TB outbreak.

What is TB?

TB is an infectious disease that primarily affects your lungs. The bacteria that cause tuberculosis are spread from person to person through tiny droplets released into the air when a person with active TB coughs, sings, talks, laughs or sneezes.

Although your body may harbor the bacteria that cause TB, your immune system usually can prevent you from becoming sick. For this reason doctors make a distinction between:

- **Latent TB infection** - In this condition, you have a TB infection, but the bacteria remain in your body in an inactive state and cause **no problems**. Latent TB, also called inactive TB, is **not** contagious.
- **Active TB** - This condition makes you sick and you can spread it to others. It can occur in the first few weeks of infection with the TB bacteria, or it may occur years later. Most people infected with TB germs **never** develop active TB.

It should be noted that just because you are around someone with active TB, does not mean you have been infected.

Signs and symptoms of active TB

- Cough that usually lasts for more than 3 weeks, some instances coughing up blood
- Unexpected weight loss
- Fever
- Fatigue
- Night sweats
- Chills
- Loss of appetite

TB can be fatal if untreated however; TB is **TREATABLE and CUREABLE**.

While the number of cases of TB has declined over the years in Shelby County and the state, it still remains a major health threat in our community because of the potential to infect so many people. In years past (2006), the number of TB cases peaked to 106 in Shelby County. In 2010, there were 48 cases of active TB reported; there have been 37 cases reported in Shelby County so far this year.

(End of Report)