

Tuberculosis

Definition:

Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease caused by a bacterium, *Mycobacterium Tuberculosis*, which usually affects the lungs. However, other parts of the body can also be affected. Not everyone infected with TB gets sick. As a result, there are two TB-related conditions: Latent TB Infection (LTBI) and active TB disease.

Signs and Symptoms:

TB disease can cause infection in the lung (pulmonary), which is considered infectious to others. TB disease can also occur outside of the lung (extrapulmonary), which is not infectious. For active, pulmonary TB disease, general symptoms may include feeling weak or sick, weight loss, fever, night sweats, and a cough lasting three or more weeks. Persons with TB of the lung may have complaints of cough, chest pain, and/or coughing up blood. Other symptoms depend on the particular part of the body that is affected.

Transmission:

TB is spread through the air from one person to another. The TB bacteria are put into the air when a person with TB disease of the lungs or throat coughs, sneezes, speaks, or sings. People nearby may breathe in these bacteria and become infected.

Diagnosis:

Tuberculosis is diagnosed by clinical symptoms, medical history, and laboratory and radiology tests.

Role of the School Nurse:

Education

- During a school related outbreak, school nurse will work as liaison between school and TB Control program.

Treatment Recommendations

- Symptomatic students and staff should be referred to their primary care providers for treatment.

Exclusions

- Exclude from school students and staff with diagnosed active Tuberculosis *only* during infectious period as determined by the provider. Exclusion is not necessary for individuals with Latent TB Infection (LTBI) or non-infectious active TB.

Reporting Requirements

- Confirmed or presumptive active Tuberculosis is reportable by telephone to Maine CDC immediately upon suspicion.

Resources:

- Maine CDC Tuberculosis website (including fact sheet)
<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/tuberculosis/index.shtml>
- Federal CDC Tuberculosis website
<http://www.cdc.gov/tb/>