



HEALTH ADVISORY

Public Health

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End TB - 2018 World Tuberculosis Day

World Tuberculosis (TB) day is celebrated annually on March 24, providing the opportunity to raise awareness about TB disease and support worldwide TB-control efforts. While great progress has been made to control and cure TB, people still become ill and die from this disease in the United States. In 2017, California reported a total of 2,056 cases of active TB and 54 of those were in San Bernardino County.

TB bacteria are spread from person to person through the air. If exposure to TB bacteria occurs, it does not necessarily mean that the exposed individual will spread the bacteria. This depends on the type of condition that the individual has. There are two types of TB-related conditions; TB Disease and Latent TB Infection (LTBI).

"Most of our active TB disease cases come from persons whose LTBI reactivates," said Dr. Maxwell Ohikhuare, Public Health Officer, "When treatment of LTBI is given and taken correctly, it reduces the risk of having it become active TB disease. Providers and patients are encouraged to work together to determine the need for testing and treatment of LTBI."

TB Disease is highly contagious, caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. It usually attacks the lungs, but can spread to other parts of the body like the kidneys, spine, and brain. The bacteria are spread through the air when a person with TB disease coughs, sneezes, or speaks. If not treated properly, TB disease can be passed to others and can be fatal. Common symptoms for TB include weakness or fatigue, weight loss, no appetite, chills, fever and sweating at night.

Inactive or "latent" TB infection (LTBI) occurs when an individual is exposed to someone with active TB disease and becomes infected, but the infection is suppressed by the person's immune system and may not have symptoms. LTBI can become active TB at any time. Generally, 1 in 10 people with LTBI will convert to active TB disease.

There are several known risk factors for LTBI:

- Foreign-born person from a country with an elevated TB rate (*i.e.*, any country other than the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, or a country in western or northern Europe)
- Immunosuppression (from HIV infection, diabetes, cancer, kidney disease on dialysis, etc.)
- Close contact to someone with infectious TB disease at any time

If you think you have risk factors for LTBI, contact your health care provider to find out how to be tested for TB. For more information about TB please contact the County of San Bernardino Department of Public Health, Communicable Disease Section at 1-800-722-4794 or visit [our website](#). For information about World TB Day, please visit the [CDC website](#).

This year's theme for World TB Day is "Wanted: Leaders for a TB Free United States. We can make history. End TB." Do your part to stop TB by using #EndTB #WorldTBDay2018 on your social media post on March 24.

