

Health Unit Media Release

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March 24th is World TB day

Tuberculosis (TB) is a disease that usually affects the lungs. People with TB disease often feel weak or sick, lose weight, have fever and have night sweats. If their TB disease is in the lungs, they may also have a chronic cough and have chest pain, and they may cough up blood. **These people can spread the germs to others.**

TB sometimes affects other parts of the body, such as the brain, the kidneys or the spine. However, they are **often** not sick because there are not as many of the germs and the germs will lie dormant (sleeping) in their body. **These people cannot spread the germs to others. However, they could develop TB disease in the future.**

Early detection for TB infection is an important key in the prevention and spread of the disease. The Mantoux Skin Test method is used to screen for the presence of TB infection. The test is performed by a nurse or doctor and involves injecting a small amount of testing solution under the skin of the forearm. The nurse or doctor will interpret the skin test two or three days later. The health care provider will lightly touch the area where the fluid was injected, feeling for a raised area or bump at the injection site. If a raised area is felt, it will be measured and the results will be interpreted. If the TB skin test result is positive, the health care provider may order a chest x-ray and further follow up. A course of antibiotics may be recommended to stop the infection from becoming TB disease. These antibiotics are free of charge from the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit.

Tuberculosis has become less common in Canada in recent years. **There continues to be individuals who are at higher risk and need to be tested and assessed by their health care provider.**

This group includes the following:

- foreign-born Canadians who have originated from countries with a high TB incidence
- travelers who spend more than three months in a country with a high TB incidence
- Aboriginal peoples
- Staff in hospitals, long term care homes, shelters, corrections facilities, doctors offices and emergency services

T.B. is preventable, treatable and curable.

For more information, ask your health care provider or contact the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit at 613-345-5685 or 1-800-660-5853 or visit www.healthunit.org.

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