

What is tuberculosis?

Tuberculosis (TB) is a disease that usually affects the lungs. TB sometimes affects other parts of the body, such as the brain, the kidneys or the spine. When left untreated, TB can result in complications that can be serious.

How can I tell if my student has TB?

The Public Health department is recommending skin tests for all students possibly exposed to TB. If your student has a positive reaction to the skin test, an X-ray will be performed to see if you have TB infection or TB disease.

What if the test is positive?

A positive skin test or blood test means you have a TB infection, but it does not necessarily mean that you have active TB. Other tests, such as an X-ray or sputum sample are needed to see if you have TB that is active or latent.

How is TB spread?

TB germs are spread from person to person through the air. TB germs are put into the air when a person with TB disease of the lungs or throat coughs, sneezes, laughs, or sings. TB is NOT spread by sharing silverware or cups or sharing saliva when kissing someone.

Can my student spread TB to family members when home for winter break?

Simply being exposed to TB does not mean a person is contagious. Individuals with active TB are more likely to spread it if they have a cough that has lasted 3 weeks or longer or have chest pain, weight loss,

weakness or fatigue, fever, chills or are coughing up blood. Seek medical attention if these symptoms are present.

Why is it taking so long to have my student tested?

Testing too soon after an exposure may result in a falsely negative test. To reduce the need for re-tests, testing will take place just after an eight week exposure period for the most accurate results.

Can students get tested even if they are considered not at risk?

Only students who have received letters from the Department of Public Health should be tested. Anyone who has not received a letter, but wants to be tested, should contact their healthcare provider.