



**NL Health  
Services**

Infection Prevention and  
Control

**FACT SHEET**

# **Tuberculosis (TB)**



## **What is Tuberculosis?**

Tuberculosis (TB) is a disease that is spread by tiny germs that float in the air when an infected individual coughs or sneezes. Individuals nearby can breathe in the germs and contract the infection. Individuals who have latent TB infection (not the disease) cannot spread it to others. Most individuals infected with the germ will not get sick; however, some will get sick and may also develop TB disease which usually attacks the lungs, kidneys, brain, or spine.

## **What are the symptoms of TB Disease?**

As TB can affect other parts of the body, symptoms would depend on what is affected. Symptoms of TB disease of the lungs include, but are not limited to:

- Coughing
- Chest pain
- Weight loss
- Night sweats
- Coughing up blood

## **Who is at risk of TB?**

- Individuals who have close contact with an infected person.
- Individuals who have had TB infection in the last two or three years.
- Individuals who are immune compromised.
- Children less than 5 years old.

## **How do you test for TB?**

- Chest x-ray.
- Sputum test.

## **How is TB treated?**

- Your physician may provide a preventative treatment with medication to keep you from getting the TB disease and becoming sick.
- It can take 6-12 months to kill the TB germs and you must take the proper medication or the germs will stay in your body and possibly cause TB disease.
- TB is curable but may take up to a year and you must finish the medication prescribed.
- TB medication may cause side effects and you will be followed by your physician or health care provider.
- Medication will be provided directly to you by your physician or health care provider.