



## **CHCHD News**

*Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department*

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### **World TB Day is March 24<sup>th</sup> Tuberculosis Affects More than Lungs**

World TB Day is March 24. In spite of the availability of medications to cure the disease, tuberculosis (TB) is still the number one single infectious disease killer in the world, accounting for more than one fourth of all preventable adult deaths in the developing world.

One third of the world's population is infected with TB; five to ten percent of those people will develop the disease. Because TB is an airborne disease that knows no geographic boundaries, its presence anywhere is a threat to all.

Typical symptoms of tuberculosis of the lungs are coughing, tiredness, night sweats, fever, weight loss and coughing up blood. Extrapulmonary tuberculosis, that is TB outside of the lungs, can occur in the lymph nodes, brain, kidneys, bones and joints, larynx and other organs. Extrapulmonary TB may not have the typical symptoms of TB and can cause serious complications depending on its site in the body. Since extrapulmonary TB is out of the ordinary, tissue samples for diagnosis can sometimes be difficult to obtain, causing the diagnosis to be delayed.

The risk of TB disease increases substantially for those who smoke, are exposed to secondhand smoke, drink four or more alcoholic drinks per day, or who have a decreased ability to fight infection due to chemotherapy or other medications that suppress the immune system, or other diseases.

The Chattanooga-Hamilton County TB Program provides clinical services for the diagnosis and treatment of TB infection and active TB disease. These free services include TB skin testing, x-rays, nursing services, sputum tests, appointments for exams, physician consultation, and TB medications. In addition, the TB Program offers written materials, videos and presentations to patients, the community and health care providers.

In 1993, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared TB "a global emergency." The global plan by WHO and its partners is to ultimately eradicate tuberculosis, starting with the 2015 goal of reducing TB prevalence and mortality by half compared to 1990 levels, and eliminating the disease by 2050.

(more)

Though the CDC has reported a gradual decline in the number of TB cases in the United States, nearly 20,000 cases of active TB still occur every year.

In Hamilton County, the tuberculosis rate in 2009 was 1.8 per 100,000, an important local improvement of the rate of 3.9 in 2008. In Tennessee, the 2009 tuberculosis rate was 3.2 per 100,000, compared to the national rate of 3.8.

#### *WHO NEEDS TO BE TESTED FOR TB?*

You may need the TB test if you:

- have any signs of TB (cough, tiredness, night sweats, fever, weight loss, coughing up blood)
- have close contact with someone who has TB disease
- are a health care worker
- live or work in a prison, jail, mental institution, or a nursing home
- have lived or traveled in a country where a lot of people have TB
- use needles to inject drugs
- have certain medical conditions such as cancer, severe kidney disease, diabetes, silicosis, HIV infection
- are on steroid medication or other immunosuppressive medications or treatments
- are severely underweight

You can contact the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department's TB Clinic at (423) 209-8030 or visit [www.cdc.gov/tb/](http://www.cdc.gov/tb/) for more information on tuberculosis.

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