



Sedgwick County...
working for you

Health Department

FACTS & details

about Sedgwick County Government

Tuberculosis (TB)

April 2011

What is tuberculosis (TB)?

Tuberculosis (TB) is a disease that is spread through the air from person to person. TB normally affects the lungs, but can also affect the brain, kidneys and spine.

How can you get TB?

TB is spread from person to person through the air. Germs enter the air when a person with TB of the lungs coughs, sneezes, laughs or sings.

What are the symptoms of TB?

Symptoms generally include feeling weak or sick, weight loss and/or night sweats. Other symptoms depend on the particular part of the body that is affected.

TB usually affects the lungs. Symptoms of TB of the lungs may include cough, chest pain and coughing up blood.

Who can get TB?

Anyone can get TB, but some people are more at risk than others. Those in the high risk category include:

- Those who are in close contact with someone with TB (such as family member, co-worker, or friend)
- Poor and/or homeless individuals
- Foreign-born individuals from countries where TB is common
- Nursing home residents
- Prisoners
- Alcoholics and drug users
- Those with medical conditions such as diabetes, certain types of cancer and HIV

How is TB diagnosed?

If you show signs of TB, you should have a TB skin test. If this test comes back positive, you will be given other tests to see if you have TB infection or TB disease.

Where can I get a TB skin test?

In Sedgwick County, you can have a TB skin test done at your doctor's office or at the Sedgwick County Health Department, 2716 W. Central. No appointment is necessary, but please call ahead for hours of operation.

What is the difference between TB infection and TB disease?

People with TB infection (without disease) have the germ that causes TB in their body. These individuals do not have symptoms and are not sick because the germ is inactive in their body. These individuals cannot spread TB to others, however, they may develop TB disease in the future, especially if they are in the high risk category. Those with TB disease are sick and display one or more obvious symptoms. These individuals are capable of spreading the infection to others. Those with TB disease can often suffer permanent body damage or death.

How is TB treated?

TB is easily prevented and cured. Individuals with both TB infection and TB disease are treated with medications. Those with TB infection are treated with medication to prevent them from developing TB disease. Medications are prescribed to cure active TB disease.

TB in Sedgwick County

The TB rate in Sedgwick County has slowly declined over the past few years and is now lower than the national average. Sedgwick County health officials work closely with the Centers for Disease Control and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to prevent the spread of TB in our community. The state of Kansas and Sedgwick County are considered low-risk regions.

For more information:

Visit the Sedgwick County Health Department website at www.sedgwickcounty.org or call 660-7450.