

TUBERCULOSIS ON CAMPUS: SCREENING & GUIDANCE

June 6, 2017

Dear UW student,

We recently learned that a person on the University of Washington-Seattle campus has been diagnosed with active tuberculosis (TB). This person is receiving treatment and will not return to campus until no longer infectious. This case does not present a risk for the vast majority of the University community.

Why we are contacting you

We identified you as someone with close enough contact with the person diagnosed with TB to be considered at risk of exposure. We therefore request you get screened for tuberculosis. The University is working closely with our local public health department, Public Health – Seattle & King County (PHSKC), to reach everyone who may have been infected and make sure your risk of TB is as low as possible.

Getting tested for tuberculosis

Tuberculosis is caused by a germ that is spread through the air, and it is important that you and all others who may have been exposed get tested to find out if you have been infected with TB.

If you have not done so already, please make an appointment with Hall Health or another health care provider to have a TB test.

Testing options include:

- > Having a TB skin test placed, then have it read between 48 and 72 hours later for a skin reaction. (Please note that Hall Health does not administer TB tests on Thursdays.)
- > Getting a simple TB blood test.

Bring a copy of this letter to your visit. If you visit a provider other than Hall Health for TB testing, please inform Public Health – Seattle & King County of your test results by calling (206) 744-4578 or emailing katelynne.gardnertoren@kingcounty.gov. It is important to share this information with the health department for public health tracking purposes.

Because it can take up to two months after TB exposure for your body to react to a TB test, you will need a second test at the end of July or early August. A reminder communication will be sent to you as that date nears.

Anyone who has been exposed to someone with TB can be treated with medication to prevent an active TB infection, depending on the results of testing and evaluation.

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Symptoms of tuberculosis

Symptoms of tuberculosis include the following:

- Fever
- Cough
- Night sweats
- Weight loss
- Malaise

If you develop these symptoms, contact Hall Health at (206) 685-1011 or your health care provider as soon as possible.

How tuberculosis is spread

Tuberculosis is relatively rare in the Seattle area, and it is easy to treat with common antibiotics. TB is not easily passed from person to person. It takes repeated and prolonged exposure in a confined indoor space to become infected with TB. Even in households in which a person has contagious TB, the risk of becoming ill is low.

The UW community is not at increased risk of TB infection as a result of this case.

Why a tuberculosis case at UW?

Experts tell us that TB is an ongoing global public health concern, and with our region at a global crossroads, it's not surprising to see active TB cases here. It's reassuring to know that our public health partners have a system in place to quickly respond to cases when they are diagnosed, so that people who are potentially exposed can be screened and treated before larger outbreaks can occur. Thanks to these efforts, our campus community is a safe environment. We are working closely with our public health partners, and we have taken measures to ensure the safety of the University community. Your safety is our top priority.

If you have any questions about TB, you can call the Public Health – Seattle & King County's TB control program at (206) 744-4579, or you can visit these [CDC](#) and [Public Health – Seattle & King County](#) web pages.

Thank you for your attention on this matter.

Sincerely,

Mark Jenkins MD
Chair, UW Advisory Committee on Communicable Diseases
Director, Hall Health Center

