

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

Health Alert Network

Update

2/14/2025

Tuberculosis in Nebraska

Nebraska reported 34 tuberculosis cases in 2023 and provisional data shows 41 Tuberculosis (TB) cases in 2024. Although Nebraska maintains a low incidence for TB, the 41 cases do represent a 20-year high.

Since early, 2024, counties around Kansas City, Kansas have been affected by a TB outbreak. As of January 31, 2025, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment is [reporting](#) 67 patients have been identified with active TB as part of this outbreak. Furthermore, 79 patients have been confirmed with latent TB. No recent Nebraska TB cases have been linked to the Kansas TB outbreak.

Background:

TB is spread through the air when a person with active disease coughs, speaks, or sings, and TB bacteria are expelled into the air where the germs can linger for several hours before another person breathes in the air. Enclosed spaces or places with poor ventilation help to facilitate TB transmission.

Active: People with [active TB disease](#) usually have one or more symptoms. TB is infectious when a person with active disease of the lung or throat is symptomatic or when body fluids with TB aerosolize. TB is caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. Symptoms of TB may include a bad cough that lasts three weeks or longer, pain in the chest, or coughing up blood or sputum (phlegm) from deep inside the lungs. Fever, chills, sweating at night, weight loss, lack of appetite, weakness or fatigue may also be seen in active TB disease. Medicines need to be given for approximately six to nine months to cure TB.

Latent: People with [latent TB](#) are infected with TB bacteria but do not have any symptoms and cannot spread TB. However, if these bacteria become active and multiply, latent TB infection can develop into [TB disease](#) which may spread from person to person.

Since 2021, TB cases and incidence rates have been rising [nationally](#). [Genotyping](#) is performed on laboratory culture confirmed TB cases to allow for thorough contact investigations.

Clinician Recommendations:

- Please consider active TB disease as a possible diagnosis for people who have symptoms consistent with TB disease. Asymptomatic people who reports exposure to someone with TB or are at [higher risk for TB](#) (either because of their exposure risks or weakened immune system due to certain medications or health conditions) should be evaluated for latent TB.

- DHHS encourages patients with active TB disease to be managed by an infectious disease health care provider. Local health departments provide directly observed therapy services, case management, and oversee the TB contact investigation for patients with active disease. With adequate treatment, most patients with TB will recover and be cured.
- [Bacille Calmette-Guerin \(BCG\) vaccine](#) is a TB vaccine generally not recommended for Nebraskans. People planning to travel overseas are encouraged to check with travel clinics if BCG would be needed for their travel.
- Latent TB is not reportable in Nebraska. [Treatment for patients with Latent TB](#) is strongly encouraged to prevent the development of active TB disease.

Testing and Lab Recommendations:

- Health care providers are encouraged to [test for TB](#) in patients who are symptomatic, have risk factors or have history of contact to someone with TB. It is helpful to inquire about country of birth, time spent in countries outside the US (including overseas travel), and history of working or living in healthcare or congregate settings (especially in areas where TB is more common), when assessing exposure risk factors.
- Labs should continue to submit *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* complex isolates to Nebraska Public Health Laboratory for genotyping and drug susceptibility testing (if not done through the originating lab).
Please reach out to the TB Program for more information by calling 402-471-6441.

Other resources:

- Financial assistance is available through the Nebraska DHHS for patients who meet eligibility qualifications. Please refer to the TB Program website for specific qualifications [TB Program Application](#) or [Tuberculosis \(TB\) Copay Assistance Information](#).
- Please direct TB questions, education needs, or reporting to your local health department. Nebraska local health department information is available at [Local Health Departments](#).

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