



Columbia County Department of Health

Nancy A. Winch, R.N., M.S.

325 Columbia Street Hudson, • NY 12534 • (518) 828-3358 • Fax (518) 828-8472

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March 24, 2010, is World TB Day. TB is short for tuberculosis. TB is caused by a bacterium and usually attacks the lungs. If not treated properly, TB can be fatal.

TB is spread through the air from one person to another when the infected person coughs, sneezes, speaks or sings. People nearby may breathe in the bacterium and become infected. TB is NOT spread by shaking someone's hand, sharing food or drink, or by touching bed linens.

Not everyone infected with the TB bacteria becomes ill. There are two TB-related conditions: latent TB and active TB.

Latent TB: TB bacteria can live in your body without causing infection, these people may not feel sick or have any symptoms of TB and they cannot spread TB to other people. The only sign of latent TB infection is a positive reaction to a tuberculin skin test (PPD). If the TB bacterium do become active, the person MAY become sick.

Active TB: TB bacteria become active if the immune system can't stop them from growing. These people usually feel sick; have a bad cough with or without bloody sputum, weight loss, night sweats and weakness. They can spread TB to other people.

People with active TB are most likely to spread the germs to people they spend time with every day, such as family members or coworkers. If you have been around someone who has TB, you should see your doctor or your local health department for testing.

A PPD skin test is performed by injecting a small amount of fluid under the skin in the lower part of the arm. This test is read in 48-72 hours by a trained health care provider. A positive PPD test only tells if a person has been infected with the TB bacterium, it does not tell whether or not the person has active TB.

The Columbia County Department of Health, 325 Columbia Street, Hudson, performs PPD skin testing every Tuesday between the hours of 2:00 and 4:00 for a fee of \$5.00. For

more information, call the Columbia County Department of Health at 518-828-3358 or log on to www.cdc.gov/tb.