

March 24, 2011

News Release

For Immediate Release

World TB Day Draws Attention to Disease

March 24th is World TB Day. Tuberculosis (TB) killed one out of every seven people in the early 1900's. Treatment options, discovered in the 1940's, have helped to slowly decrease the incidence of disease. Drug resistance has slowed the decline in illness and created a challenge for the healthcare community.

Tuberculosis is a disease caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. The disease normally attacks the lungs, but can affect other areas of the body as well. It is spread through the air when individuals with active cases of disease cough, sneeze, or talk. Not everyone infected with TB will develop active disease. Symptoms of active disease include: cough lasting longer than 3 weeks, pain in chest, coughing up blood, fatigue, weight loss, chills, fever, and night sweats. Medications are available to treat the disease.

Currently, an estimated 1/3 of the world's population is infected with TB. Those at higher risk of exposure to TB (patient care, close contact with person infected with TB) are encouraged to get a TB skin test on an annual basis.

The health department provides treatment to individuals with tuberculosis infection and to those with tuberculosis disease. A follow-up investigation is conducted to identify people who may have been exposed to someone with tuberculosis disease. Nurse case managers meet with clients on a routine basis during treatment to ensure their medication is taken properly. Case management is available at no charge to those who have tuberculosis infection or disease.

For questions or more information on tuberculosis, please call Kendra Williams at 417-864-1408 or visit our website at www.springfieldmo.gov/health/tuberculosis.html.

For more information contact: Katie Towns-Jeter MPH, Public Information Administrator, 417-874-1205



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