

## NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 23, 2009

### **FAMILY MEMBER BECOMES SECOND TB CASE**

VICTORIA – A close family contact of a University of Victoria (UVic) student who was diagnosed with active tuberculosis earlier this month has been confirmed as having the disease.

This second TB case is also a student at the UVic. The Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) will therefore be notifying an additional 90 students and staff that they may have been exposed to pulmonary TB. This is in addition to 230 individuals who were notified on February 6, 2009 about exposure to the first case.

"It is clear in this situation that the second person became infected through very close contact with the first case outside of the university setting" said Dr. Murray Fyfe, Medical Health Officer. "Therefore, this does not indicate an increase in risk to those at the university".

Letters have been sent to individuals who have had more than casual exposure to either case asking that attend a clinic for TB skin testing and information about the disease. Clinics have been held at UVIC over the past two weeks and will be held again during the week of February 23, 2009. Test results will be confirmed following a second round of testing that will take place in April.

"Testing is a prudent precaution for people possibly exposed through ongoing, closed-room contact with the student," said Fyfe. "Casual contact in public areas such as a library or cafeteria does not constitute a significant exposure such that testing is required."

Infection and illness from tuberculosis occur slowly compared to many other infectious diseases. This allows a longer period of time to trace those who may have been exposed, when compared to other diseases (such as measles) Those who have had significant exposures can be tested and, if found to be infected, treated to prevent illness.

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Tuberculosis is spread through the air, but the disease is usually only transmitted when there is close, prolonged exposure to an infected person. Sharing clothing, dishes or drinks does not spread the disease. Tuberculosis can appear gradually, with symptoms including fever, ongoing cough with or without sputum, loss of appetite/weight loss, night sweats or chills. Any individual with symptoms possibly consistent with tuberculosis should see a physician for assessment and possible skin testing.

"Healthfile" information sheets on Tuberculosis and the Tuberculosis Skin Test are available at any public health unit (see the blue pages in the telephone directory for locations and phone numbers), or on the VIHA website at [www.viha.ca](http://www.viha.ca).

– 30 –

**Attachments:**

HealthFile 51a – Tuberculosis (TB) Disease: <http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthfiles/hfile51a.stm>

HealthFile 51B – Tuberculosis (TB) Skin Test <http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthfiles/hfile51b.stm>

**Contact:**

Shannon Marshall  
VIHA Communications  
250-370-8270

Patty Pitts  
UVic Communications  
250-721-7656