



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 14, 2009

ONE CASE OF TB DIAGNOSED IN NANAIMO

Nanaimo – A young man from Nanaimo has recently been confirmed as having tuberculosis.

The individual was diagnosed earlier this month with a TB infection that was likely contracted outside of Canada, and he immediately began treatment. Contact tracing by Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) public health staff is underway. This includes follow up with those who may have had considerable, close exposure to this individual in order to determine if they may have become infected.

"Close contacts will be tested as precaution for people possibly exposed through ongoing, closed-room contact with the young man," said Dr. Fred Rockwell, VIHA Medical Health Officer. "Casual contact in public areas such as a shopping malls or restaurants 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.

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.

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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>

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