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World TB Day 2024: CA tuberculosis cases increased last year, including in Solano County

SOLANO COUNTY – World Tuberculosis Day 2024 commemorates Robert Koch’s discovery of the tuberculosis (TB) bacterium on March 24, 1882. Recently, California has seen a resurgence of TB cases back to pre-pandemic levels. TB also continues to affect Solano County residents.

“Anyone can catch tuberculosis, and TB can still kill,” said Dr. Cameron Kaiser, Solano County Deputy Public Health Officer and TB Controller. “That’s why following up on cases and exposures with testing and treatment is so important. TB control programs are still a vital need in public health.”

Statewide, California cases increased 15 percent from 1,842 in 2022 to 2,113 in 2023, an increase of 24 percent since 2020. The statewide increase back to pre-pandemic levels is the largest for a single year in more than three decades.

Solano County recorded 26 active cases of TB in 2023 and 25 in 2022, up from 18 in 2021. Active TB cases include patients who are ill and contagious. However, these and other cases also affect hundreds of additional people who are exposed. Exposed individuals require testing and potentially treatment for latent tuberculosis, which can progress to active tuberculosis if untreated. So far, in 2024 the County has recorded three new active cases.

Symptoms of TB disease can include a cough for more than two to three weeks, coughing up blood, shortness of breath, fever, night sweats and weight loss. Active TB can be lethal even in previously healthy individuals. When a person with TB disease coughs, people who share that same air can become infected as well. Effective treatments are available but are lengthy and sometimes require multiple antibiotics.

People born outside of the United States continue to experience higher TB rates compared to their U.S.-born counterparts, with the highest rates in Solano County among Asians and Hispanics. Others at high risk for TB include those who have traveled to or lived in a country with an elevated TB rate, have weakened immune systems, or have come in close contact to someone with infectious TB.

If you have a risk factor for TB or may have been exposed to a case of TB, ask your healthcare provider about testing and treatment to protect yourself and your family. Visit Solano Public Health’s [Tuberculosis Control Program](#) for more information and resources. Consider following Solano County Public Health on Facebook @SolanoCountyPH (www.Facebook.com/SolanoCountyPH).

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