

## NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release  
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### **Tuberculosis Day 2026**

Join Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) in recognizing World Tuberculosis Day on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2026. Tuberculosis (TB) is a serious but treatable infection that affects millions of people around the world each year. World Tuberculosis Day is an opportunity to learn more about this disease and raise awareness about efforts to end TB.

#### **What to Know About Tuberculosis**

Tuberculosis is a lung infection caused by the bacteria *Mycobacterium Tuberculosis*. It spreads through the air when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. While it is possible for someone without symptoms to carry TB bacteria, only someone with symptoms can spread the disease to others.

Common symptoms of active tuberculosis include:

- Cough that lasts several weeks
- Coughing up blood
- Chest pain
- Fever
- Night sweats
- Unexplained weight loss

Tuberculosis is most common in certain parts of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. People who travel to countries where TB is common are at the highest risk of becoming infected. If you travel often or have questions about TB testing, speak with your healthcare provider.

#### **Public Health Response**

SWNPHD monitors all tuberculosis laboratory results for our nine-county district. In the event of a positive result, SWNPHD works closely with healthcare providers and Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to follow public health protocols. This includes confirming the diagnosis and identifying and notifying anyone who may have been exposed. These steps help ensure timely treatment and prevent the spread of disease.

“There have been no active cases of tuberculosis in southwest Nebraska this calendar year,” says Chloe Martin, Program Manager for SWNPHD. “It is not common in our area, but if a case does occur, SWNPHD will act quickly and keep our communities informed.”

There is a slowly increasing trend of tuberculosis cases in Nebraska and nationwide over the last few years. According to DHHS, a total of 41 TB cases were reported in Nebraska in 2024, an increase of seven cases compared to the 34 cases reported in 2023. The 41 reported cases mark the highest annual case count in the past 20 years. DHHS continues to partner with local health departments, federal agencies, prisons, infectious disease specialists, and the international communities to prevent and manage TB in Nebraska.

“Prevention is key,” said Dr. Timothy Tesmer, DHHS Chief Medical Officer. “I encourage Nebraskans who are at higher risk or have been exposed to reach out to their healthcare provider or local health department to get tested. TB testing is simple and may involve a skin test or a blood test. If necessary, additional tests such as chest X-rays may be conducted.”

For more information on tuberculosis visit [cdc.gov/tb](https://www.cdc.gov/tb) or contact SWNPHD at 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. You can follow us on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram or view the website at [www.swhealth.ne.gov](http://www.swhealth.ne.gov) which contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health.

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